

THE
LIFE OF FAITH

in times of
TRIAL and AFFLICTION
cleared up and explained,

From

HEB. X: XXXVIII.

Now the just shall live by faith.

By
JOHN BROWN
Minister of the Gospel.



Printed for the Author,

ANNO DOM. MD. CC. LXXIX,

THE HISTORY OF

IN THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

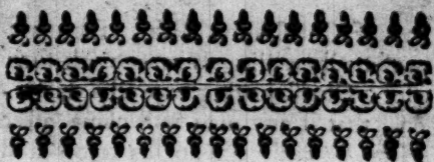
OF THE

OF THE

Printed for the

Annals of the

4



An
E P I S T L E
To the
R E A D E R.
Christian READER.

Need not tell thee, that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God; as *Paul* and *Barnabas* told the Disciples, whom they were confirming, and exhorting to continue in the faith *Act. 14: Vers. 22*. Seing thy outward Profession

An Epistle

sion of Christianity saith, thou art professedly willing to meet with such a lot, Christ having expressly declared, that if any man will come after Him, he must take up his cross and follow him *Mat. 10: Vers. 38. and 16: Vers. 24. Mark. 8: Vers. 34.* And if thou be following Christ in truth, thou either hast already begun to taste of this cup, or mayest shortly find in experience, that bonds and affliction abide such, as through grace resolve to be blameless and harmless, the sones of God without rebuke, in the mids of a crooked and perverse Nation, among whom they shine, as lights in the world. For wise and holy ends, hath the Supreme and Absolute Sovereigne, the blessed and onely Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords determined, that his Disciples and followers should, in one measure or other, drink of this his cup, and be baptized with the baptism,

to the *Reader*.

baptisme , wherewith he himself was baptized; and it doth not become us to quarrel upon this account, how unpleasant so ever Suffering be unto the flesh, and how sharpe so ever the storme blow in our face; but rather to stoop and adore; yea with a chearful submission , and hearty acquiescence; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy set before him , endured the cross, despising the shame, to follow such a Captaine , with alacrity of soul, rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name. It is true, (as the Apostle saith *Heb. 12: Verf. 11.*) no chastening for the present seemeth joyous , but grievous; never the less afterward it yeeldeth the peacable fruit of righteousness to them, which are exercised thereby: And the faith of this (beside many other soul-comforting and heart-strengthening cordials, every where

An Epistle

to be found in the Word) should steel us with a fixed resolution to follow the Lord, with full purpose of heart, and not to be ashamed of Him before men, how-beit we should be put to a resisting unto blood, striving against sin. As the Lord did fairely forewarn all, who would choose him for their Captain, Head and Husband, of vvhat they were to expect in his Company, and in his Service and Warfare, that their embracing of Him might be pure and single; so knowing what reluctancy flesh and blood would have at this way, how corruption would on this occasion boile up, and how Satan would improve this to his advantage; and knowing withall how weak his followers would be to stand and to withstand all this opposition inward and outward; He hath left in his Word such store of sweet and refreshing grounds of joy and consolation, that,

to the *Reader.*

if beleevd and faithfully improven, might not onely create a satisfaction in the soul with that lot; but even fill it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ vwill not have his followers looking out soure and sad, as if their lot, even when outwardly it would appear saddest, were not very far preferable unto the choicest condition, that such, as are Strangers and Enemies to Christ, have in this world: and therefore hath he left, in his Word, such a rich treasure of promises, what of the hundered fold to be had even with persecution, in this life, what of inconceivable and inexpressible good, in the world to come, whereby the Beleever may be made to sing thorough the darkest and dimmest part of all the valley of teares, which he is to passe, ere he come home, vwhere he shall sigh no more.

How unsutable then must it be, and how dishonourable to such a Master,

An Epistle

ster, vwhen his Servants and follow-
vers, (for whom He hath made such
rich provision of all necessities not
only for their simple being; but also
for their comfortable and cheerful
well-being) carrying, as if they
served a thankless Master; and follow-
ing him vvith no less despondencie
and discouragment, than if he had
utterly forgotten them, and vvould
not vvith one look of h's eye so
much as take notice of them. This,
sure, cannot but be reflected on
vvith sorrov and grieve, as hugely
dishonourable to our Lord, as discour-
aging to others, & as tending to bring
up an evil report of Christ, and his
vvay, to the rejoyceing of the hearts
of Enemies and ill-vvillers, and to
the vveaking and fainting of their
ovvn souls.

I grant, though Belcevers have a
vvell full of all consolation at hand;
yet

to the Reader.

yet without divine assistances of Light and Spiritual vvifdom, they may be, as if there vv ere no such thing: vv hich sheweth the necessity of a constant adherence to, and dependence upon Him for sutable supplies, in the day of need; that thereby they may have their eyes opened to see, where the wel is, and may be taught and helped to draw out of these wels of salvation, what their present suffering case calleth for; and when they become so weak and sickly, that they cannot suck the brest when at their mouth; he may milk-in consolation, to the reviving of their souls, and strengthen them with strength, in their souls; for his bowels are more tender, than the bowels of any mother that ever was.

And seing it is so, the chiefe care of his people, in a day of trial, should be, how to stand fast, and quite them-

An Epistle

themselves like men, in avowing and witnessing to the controverted and opposed truths of Christ: Their care should be, how to be found faithful, and stedfast, in owning his Cause, counting it their glory to be his witnesses upon such an account: And as for through-bearing strength and consolation, leave that upon Him, who will not leave his followers, (who in singleness of heart, desire to abide by Him, in the hour of temptation, and not deny him,) when their case calleth for his presence and supplies: He will come in the due season, and let them finde that he is come, to their everlasting joy and consolation.

Because it cannot but be necessary and useful unto beleevers, who either are in such a condition already, or have nothing else to expect, if they resolve to abide faithful unto the end,

to the *Reader*.

end, to be considering, what a life is to be had even in manifold deaths, for the cause and Testimony of Jesus; and to be Meditating upon the multiplied grounds of consolation, which are stored-up in the Word, whereby they may be strengthened against temptations, fortified against the assaults of Satan, and his Instruments, enabled to withstand multifarious discouragements from within and from without, and helped through the blessing of God to stand fast in the faith, blow the storme as it will: I have therefore adventured to communicat unto them, (as an help in this case) some thoughts of that *Life*; that they are not only to hope for, but even called to labour for, in such a day: And withall have adjoined some remarks upon a few of those many Considerations, that may contribute hereunto, purposing, if the Lord vvil, and if this Essay finde

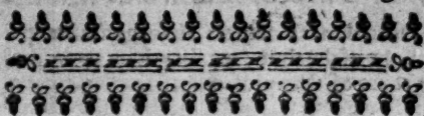
An Epistle to the Reader.

finde acceptance , and shall contribute any thing unto this designe , to followv forth this matter , at more length hereafter , as occasion shall offer. Fare vvel.

**Thy Servant in the vvork
of the Lord.**

JOH. BROWN.

The



The
LIFE OF FAITH
in time of Trials.

HEBR. X: 38.

Now the Just shall live by faith.

CHAP. I.

The Words cleared, and some
Generals proposed.



What the scope of the Apostle is here, is obvious from the foregoing words: He hath been all along pressing them with all sorts of Arguments & Motives to a steadfastness in the faith and profession of the Christian Religion, which they had embraced; & which

A

he

he feared many of them, through the temptations of the time, persecutions upon the account of that profession, the opposition made unto that way by many of their Brethren, the jewes, and the subtile insinuations and arguments used by obstinate, or apostate jewes, to bring them back againe to *Judaisme*, and to a renunceing of the way of Christianity, should, after the example of others, and by other meanes, be made to renunce and fall away from.

He laid before them, *verses 26: 27, 28, 29, 30, 31.* The fearful and dreadful judgments and plagues, beyond what could be expressed, that Apostats from the Truth, once received and professed, had to expect and look for; and that in words, pointing forth the inconceivable hieght and hainousness of the Sin, and the inevitableness and irremedilessness of that inexpressible wrath and vengeance, that was awaiting Apostates: the very reading whereof may stricke us with horreur, and cause our Souls to tremble. *For if we sin wilfully* (that is, deliberately, resolutely, and fixedly) *after we have received the knowledge of the Truth* (and so can pretend no ignorance, but depart from and renunce the Truth, over the belly of light and Conscience) *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins* (i. e. the case of such is irre-
irreme-

irremediable, they have renounced and willingly and wickedly departed from the only way of Peace, Pardon and Reconciliation with God; and there is no other way, how their finnes can be blotred out; so that their case is desperate) *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries* (what ever they may dreame, and fancie to obtaine by their renouncing of the way of Christ, and by departing from the good way, which once they had embraced and professed; yet all, that in truth they have to look for, is judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries: Where every word hath a weighty emphasis; and this they are to look for, and to expect certainly, and that accompanied with fear, dread and horreur; so that their torment & horreur shall commence & beginne with their beginnings to depart and backslide: this certaine, fearful and horrible expectation of the just and final judgment, that shall be pure divine indignation, and fiery destructive indignation, appointed and reserved for open Rebels and Adversaries, shall be their portion, and that in stead of Pardon, Peace & Reconciliation with God, through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God) *He that despised Moses law died without mercy, under two*

4 The Scope and Words

or three witnesses (see Numb. 15: 30. Deut. 17: 2-8. & 19: 15. & 16: 19. & 13: 8. & 25: 12) of how much so'er punishment, suppose ye, shall be betought worthy (as if he had said, can ye imagine, that, when the despisers of Moses's law could not escape the severity of judgment, but behoved to die without mercy or pardon; the despisers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall escape? Nay, can you imagine, how much worse, forer and more dreadful, the judgement shall be, that awaiteth such, as Apostatize from the Gospel? Which sin he vividly describeth, and holdeth forth in its native colours, how light so ever they accounted it to be, saying) who hath troden under foot the Son of God (It was a capital and unpardonable crime for any to have despised the Law of Moses: but how capital, hainous and fearful an iniquitie must it be, of an how more dreadful and deep crimson-dye must it be, to take the Son of God, the only Son of God; and handle him so basely, as to conculcate him, and tread him under foot, beyond which, an higher expression of indignity, contempt, wrath and malice, can not be shown to any person whatsoever? And of this nature and complexion is their sin, who Apostatize from the Truth of the Gospel) and hath counted the blood of the Covenant,
where-

wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, (that is, looked upon Christ, while offering up himself a Sacrifice to satisfy justice, for the finnes of his people, and shedding his blood, (wherewith he confirmed the New Covenant and Testament; and therefore the cup, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is called *The N. Testam. in his blood* 1 Cor. 11: v. 25. Luk. 22. v. 20. and *Christ's blood of the New Testament* Mark. 14: 24. Mat. 26: 28. See Heb. 9: 14. to the end) as a meere malefactor; and his blood to be no better, then the blood of the other two, that were crucified with him, though it was the Blood of God, the blood of the Mediator of the New Testament, shed for the Redemption of transgressions, the blood of a spotless Sacrifice; and blood, that purgeth Consciences Heb. 9: 14, 15. and though it was that blood, wherewith this great High Priest was in a soleinne manner sanctified and accepted, as an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour Ephes. 5: 2. and received into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us Heb. 9: 24. having put away sin by the Sacrifice of himself vers. 26.) and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace, (that is, hath, with the highest significations of Reproach, Contumely, Rage and Despite, rejected and

denied all the witnessings and testimonies, which the Holy Spirit gave unto the truth of the Gospel, preached by Christ and his Apostles and Ambassadors, by signes and wonders and diverse Miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost *Heb. 2: 4.* either ascribing these great and undeniable Miracles unto the Devil, to *Beelzebub* the Prince of Devils, as did the *Pharizees Mat. 12: 24.* For which the Lord denounced their sin unpardonable, as being the sin and blasphemy against the holy Ghost, which shall neither be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come *v. rs. 31, 32.* or denying them; and all the fruites and effects of this Gospel, in Churches and in Souls, manifest in the manifold and rare gifts, than poured out in abundance; and in the heavenly and sanctifying graces, working a wonderful change in souls, to the turning of them from the world, and from vanities, to serve the living God; or both, and accounting all but delusions and fanaticisme) *For we know him that hath said, vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord and againe, the Lord shall judge his people, (See Deut. 32 35, 36.* Hereby he sheweth, that God, whose it is properly to render vengeance, and who doth not faile to render a recompence unto the wicked and malicious oppressours and injurers of his

his people, when he heareth, and judgeth the cause betwixt them and their enemies, would not suffer this high indignity done to Himself, to His only Son, and to his Holy Spirit, to go away unpunished: We know, (saith he) what an one He is, how Just, Holy, Righteous and Zealous a God he is, with whom such have to do. And he further addeth) *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (It is a matter that may strick horror, in the hearts of the stoutest and proudest of Rebels and Apostates, to consider, that it is not man, that they have to do with, but God; and God, who is no dead Idol, or a sleeping, regardless and unconcerned God; but a living God, and a living God, who hath hands and armes of power: in whose hands and armes of wrath and vengeance such must fall, who depart from the truth, and turne their back upon Christ, and his Gospel: and what a fearful thing is it, to fall upon the edge of that sword, and into his hands, out of whose hands, ~~all~~ the power on earth, and in hell too, can not deliver?

From all which, we may take notice of these foure general and comprehensive Truthes.

I. That let Apostates and such as depart from the Truth of God, once received and

8 The Scope and Words

professed, think as little of their sin of defection and backsliding from Christ and his Truthes, as they will; and let them put what face upon it they please, the Lord looketh upon it, as the dreadfullest of sins. No such Epithets finde we put upon any sin, in all the book of God, as is here put upon this sin: no sin is capable of such hightning aggravations, as we finde here mentioned and *Chap. 6: 6* where the same sin is spoken of. Apostates from the truth do little consider this, how by their renunceing the Gospel, and departing from Gospel Truthes and Interests, they are crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and are putting him to an open shame, yea they trade underfoot the Son of God, and count the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy and common thing, no better then the blood of any other man, yea or of a Malefactor; and do despite unto, and rub reproach and contumelie upon the Spirit of God, in all his condescensions of love and works of free grace. How horrid must this iniquity be? How hateful and abominable in the eyes of the Lord? And how should the consideration of this make it appear most hateful unto us; and a sin, that by all meanes we should labour to be free of? How should this cause,

us

us carefully keep from the least beginnings of this evil; not knowing where we shall sist our course, if once we beginne to depart from known and acknowledged Truthes? How dangerous is it to sin wilfully, freely, deliberately, of choise and of set purpose, (as the *Aethiopick* Version translateth that word, which we render *wilfully*,) and so deny, or depart from and renunce any point of truth, the knowledge whereof we have once had, and received, and which we have once owned and professed, as the Truth of Christ? For, though this be but a partial Apostasie; yet it openeth the door, & prepareth the way for a total Apostasie: And who deliberately & of choise, not meerly from a surprisal of fear, & the violence of an unexpected temptation, (as was in *Peters* case, when he denied his Master) renunceth, denieth and opposeth one known point of truth; will not much stand to renunce and deny another, upon the same account. and when in the same circumstances, if free grace recover him not in time; and from a second it may come to a third, and that more fundamental. And who can promise to himself a sure place of footing, when he is tumbling head-long down a steep hill? The surest way is to stand, and resist the devil, in the very beginning: for whom the devil

once gets a going before him, he will easily cause to run. The temptation, how terrible so ever it appear, yet is really weakest, in the beginning: and the same temptation continueing will increase in strength and force, as the person yeeldeth; because the more he yeeldeth, the weaker he becometh; and so the more unable to withstand: beside, that Conscience loseth its tenderness; and so the mans guaird is broken: to speak nothing of what is most terrible, and ought most to be feared, that is, God's judicial relinquishing and giving up such; and then, where will they, or where can they stand?

2. Whatever great things Apostates from the Truth may promise to themselves, in the world, by their defection from and relinquishing of truth, and how ever they may judge themselves secure from all punishment from men; yet fearful things have they to expect from the God of Vengeances, and that inevitably. *It is Impossible*, (saith the Spirit of the Lord Heb. 6: 4, 6.) *to renew them againe unto Repentance*: and here it is said, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for sins*: And why? Because they have renounced all part, portion and interest, in the one and only Sacrifice for sins, *having crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and trode him under their foot, and accounted the blood of the*

the Covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, as a common unholy thing; Yea in stead of any hope of mercy, remedie and help, they have nothing in the place thereof, but an expectation of judgment, and that no ordinary expectation, but an expectation, that is fearful and terrible. The Syriack turne the words thus; but fearful judgment is ready. The Arabick thus, but an expectation of horrid judgment. The Æthiopick, The judgment is formidable: All pointing forth, that the judgment, that such have to look for, is terrible, dreadful and formidable, so that the very forethought of it is such a kinde of expectation, as causeth horror and dread. And moreover it is added. fiery indignation, or, as in the original, the Zeal of fire, the rage of fire, zeal flaming all like fire; and that which is reserved for his Adversaries, and refractory Rebels, who shall be devoured and eaten-up therewith. O! who may stand before this devouring fire of God's indignation and wrath? Apostates may make a mock at sin, and at this sin, of departing from the truth; but what will they say, when this fiery indignation shall in judgment reach them, and devoure them; and when the very fore apprehensions of it shall beginne the horror of hell in their soul? There is a judgment, and a sentence of

12 The Scope and Words

udgment awaiting such , more dreadful and terrible than , and not onceto be compared, or named in one day with, the capital sentence of death , inflicted under the law, without all mercy or commiseration. It is a worse and sorer punishment ; and how much worse , and how many moe talent weights of wrath and indignation are in it , no man can tell ; *Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy of, &c.* As the aggravations of the sin are inconceivably great ; so the aggravations of the judgment and punishment , which such deserve, and expose themselves unto, who are guilty of this sin , are above all our comprehensions. And further, the Lord is their darty , *to whom vengeance belong Psal 94: 1.* & who, as righteous Judge and Governour, will avenge himself upon these Enemies , and give a just recompence , according to their crying and hainous iniquity. *We know him, that hath said , &c.* The Lord hath assumed this to himself, as his just prerogative , and he will maintaine and manifest the same, in the dreadful effects thereof, in avenging Himself, and his Son Jesus Christ , and his Holy Spirit of grace, on these enemies , who have, in the highest measure, and in the most arrogant manner, rebelled against all the Three, *And againe the*
Lord

Lord shall judge his people, Even that God, who is engaged to defend his people, and to judge them, and avenge them of their enemies, will appear against those, who are Rebels to Father, Son and Holy Ghost; in a manner and measure suitable to their iniquities. And finally, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.* And this, such cannot escape, escape what they will at the hands of Men: Flee whither they will, and as fast as they can, they shall fall at length into the hands of a sin revenging, living God, and how little so ever they either think of or feare this now, it shall be found to be a tremendous and fearful thing. Who can rescue, or deliver them out of his hands, who is a living God? Can their hearts endure, or their hands be strong, in that day? Will they wrestle themselves out of his grips? No sure.

3. In a time of defection, when there are many temptations thereunto, many driveing it on, persecution and sharp trials of afflictions attending such, as would faine be kept streight and stedfast, many falling off piece and piece, others staggering; it were good, and it is seasonable and useful for one and other, to be holding these two looking glasses before their eyes; and to be dwelling much upon the thoughts of these

two grand things, formerly mentioned; to wit, the horrid evil of the sin of Apostasie & Defection from the Truth; and the horrible and dreadful consequences and sad effects of judgment, wrath and fiery indignation, that attend such a course. The *Hebrewes* here were in great hazard of falling from the truth; many were dayly falling off, and Apostatizing to Judaisme, some wholly, some in part; great was the rage of their own Countrey men, the jewes, against them, as we see *I Thes. 2: 14, 15, 16.* where we see, with what rage the corrupt infidel Jewes opposed the Gospel, persecuting the Gospel Churches in *Judea*, and the Apostles, and were contrary to all men, forbidding the Apostles to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, and so were filling up their sins alway; for the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost: And what afflictions these did meet with, and were yet to meet with, the following verses *2, 33, 36, 37.* show Now, while they are in this condition and hazard we see what meanes the Apostle useth, to keep them stedfast in the owning and openly avowing of the Truth: He layeth before them, both the hainousness of the sin of drawing back, and also the sad and inevitable judgments, that will follow upon their defection: whereby we see,

see, that it is a seasonable study, in such a time, to be meditating much on those two. It is not good, that we turn secure, or careless. The Devil is not asleep, but is going about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and he wants not Instruments to imploy in his work, nor wants he surable baits and allurments, to apply to his purpose: And therefore we should be making use of this antidote against his poison. The impress of these two things upon the Soul, would prove of noble advantage to people; in a reeling time, & in a day of defection: For (1.) Hereby they would be stirred up to use all meanes for establishment in the Truth, that they might be kept straight in the day of Temptation: and not trust to their own strength, the hazard being so great; but be seeking dayly to be strengthened of God with strength in their souls; and to be putting on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand, and to withstand. (2.) They would not, in that day, lean to their own understandings; far less would they consult flesh and blood in the matter, and see what would promise most ease and quiet to the flesh: For, would they think, shall I do so, and run such a risque? (3.) This would make them afraid of the very first beginnings of Apostasie,

stasie; or of any thing, that had but the least tendency thereunto; it would make them stoutly, and resolutely resist the very beginnings of evil, and be far from making the least breach in their consciences, lest the damme being once a little broke down, the waters should rush forth with such a violence, that there should be no stopping of it againe. (4.) This would blunt the points of all the darts of temptations, taken from the great things in a world, promised to such, as turne with the times, and depart from Christ, when a storme cometh on their face: alas, what would such think of all these allurments? what would the riches, pleasures and delights thereof avail them, when the fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation should enter within the chambers of their soul, and drink-up, their moisture and marrow? What could countervail the dammage, which could not but be suffered by that inexpressibly and inconceivably greater punishment, that Apostates shall meet with? (5.) This would also fortifie them against the menacings, threatenings, torments, imprisonments, fineings, and deaths from Enemies, for the truth of Christ: for the impression of this truth upon their heart, that neither heart
can

can conceive, nor tongue can expresse, what shall befall them, who fall in the hands of a living God, who is a God, to whom vengeance belongeth and will recompense, would cause them smile at all, that man could do, and laugh at the shaking of his spear, and little feare the wrath of Kings, as seeing this Invisible God, in whose hands Apostats will fall: What would all the deaths in the world seem to them, even the most cruel and mercilefs deaths, who had this how - much - sorer punishment before their eyes, that such shall be accounted worthy of, as trade under foot the Son of God? (6.) The Consideration of these things would cause such, as through one temptation or other, have been made to turn aside, and to do or say that, which once they had thought never to have said, or done, to make hast out of that way, wherein they are entered, the end whereof is final and full Apostasie and Death; and stay no longer therein, lest there be no back turning hereafter; This, sure, if beleevved and fixed in the soul, would cause them, consider their wayes, and turne againe to the Lord, by speedy Repentance, that they may recover what they have lost. Peter went out quickly, and wept bitterly.

4. We may hence also see, That as the
Con-

Consideration of the hainousness of the sin of defection, and of the dreadful wrath and judgment, that awaiteth such, as shall Apostatize from the truth, is very futable to Gospel-times; and very corresponding with a Gospel-frame; so this becometh a meane, sanctified of the Lord, to preserve his own chosen & sanctified ones, from that full and final Apostasie, that others may fall into, and never recover themselves; and so cause some stand fast, in an evil time, against all assaults and temptations. We may not think, that the Gospel hath nothing to do with threatnings, seeing we finde such here, and elsewhere. Nor must we think, that these Suppositions and Threatnings upon supposition, do evince, that such as are truly gracious shall fall away from the truth, either fully or finally: This is but a corrupt and groundless inference, overturning both the *Covenant of Redemption*, and the *Covenant of Grace*. But we must look upon these Proposals and Threatnings, as meanes, contributing, through the blessing of God, to the more firme establishment of his people, and to keep them from final defection, and to recover them from a partial falling away, and to render others inexcusable. As a mean therefore unto this end, should these things be thought upon, with

with dependance upon the Lord for a blessing, whose blessing only maketh meanes effectual unto their ends.

From *vers.* 32. and forward, the Apostle maketh use of another argument, to press them to constancy, and stedfastness in the faith, notwithstanding of all, that they may yet be put to suffer for adhering to the Truth, saying, *But call to remembrance the former dayes, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.* He would have them remembring their former dayes of suffering: one would think, that this would rather prove a discouragment, than any argument stirring them up unto constancy: But the Argument is strong, and wisely managed, and every word hath a force in it. For (1.) The *former dayes* are now past, and all that sorrow and suffering is over; all of it being but a transient and passing evil; yesterdaies sorrow, paine and griefe is gone to day; and so is not to be laid in the ballance with that endless alwayes abiding, and permanent sorrow and paine, and gnashing of teeth, that abide the wicked: and and such as fall away from the way of Truth. (2.) They are but *daies*: the time is short, and soon at an end. Ten dayes are far from long evermore: and what can this light and momentany affliction import, when laid in
the

20 The Scope and Words

the ballance with that Hyperbolically Hyperbolick eternal weight of glory 2 Cor. 4: v. 17? (3.) At that time, they were *illuminated*, that is brought into a state of light; The *Syriack* and *Æthiopick* turne it, *in which ye received Baptisme*, that is, were solemnly initiated, and enrolled among Christs Scholars and Souldiers. He would have them remembring, how at their first appearing in the fields for Christ, and engaging in Christianity, they did meet with trials and tribulations; and so found, what they were to lay their account with, all alongs, that bonds and affliction were to abide them, and that they must take up their cross dayly, and follow Christ; And therefore they should not now faint, because of continuing afflictions; they being hardned thereunto, at the very beginning; and finding that there was nothing else to be expected, all the way, they cannot say, they are deceived, or disappointed; for they could not but know and experience, upon what termes they did engage, and were to continue. And seeing at their first out-setting they stood, when they were but green souldiers; what a shame were it for them now to faint and give-over. (4.) This Word *Illuminated* saith further, That at that time, through the Spiritual Light of God, while they were
but

but young Christians, they received such convincing illumination, concerning the Truth, that they were perswaded thereof, notwithstanding of all the dark clouds, that affliction, and persecution upon the account thereof, could raise to darken its glory and beauty. And shall you now (would he say) when the truth should have become more glorious & amiable, desert it, & turn from it; and thereby with all declare, that all your former illumination was but a mere delusion? (5.) They had a *great fight of afflictions* before; they had their *sufferings* before, and a whole battel and *fight* of them, yea and a *great fight* of them: And what can they feare more now? (6.) And while they were engaged in that battel-fight of suffering, and afflictions, which was no meane and common one, but was a great fight, they *endured* were not shaken, nor made to recoile: and what a shame were it for them now, when beaten Souldiers, and Christians of a longer standing, to fainte and sit up, as if all their strength were gone, and their hope fully cut off Thus we see, how this one argument is many; and every one of them should have a distinct language unto all the faithful followers of the Lord, not to lose heart and quite courage, notwithstanding of all they have suffered, since
the

the very day they engaged in this warfare, under Christ the Captaine: The remembrance of their old sufferings should not faine them, but rather animate them, upon this account, that He who helped them before can helpe them yet; and that they can not say, that when they engaged at first, it was with this reserve, that they should be free of sufferings, or at least should be put to endure sufferings and afflictions only for some short time, and a few dayes, and then when that storme was over should die in their nest, in peace and quietness.

In the next place *vers.* 33, 34. he explaineth this great fight of afflictions, shewing wherein it stood: Whence we may observe on the bye, That the Lord taketh special notice of all the Items, Parts, Ingredients, and Circumstances of the battels, and fightings of afflictions, which his people are put to endure, on his account: As also of their carriage and deportment, while under these wrestlings, and fighting these battels: and as he knoweth and taketh notice of these things; so he will make honourable mention thereof, to their commendation and praise, and make them and others both know, that he hath taken notice of these things.

This great fight of theirs he brancheth forth

forth in two parts, the one comprehendeth what befel themselves immediatly, the other what they suffered through Sympathie with others: as to the first, he saith, *partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions.* And againe *vers. 34.*

And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance. They did

meet with sufferings in their Name, in their Persons, in their Honour, and in their Goods,

(1.) In their Name, they were reproached, slandered, upbraided, called Traitors, and Apostates from Moses; and what not?

As it is sad and grievous to a noble, and generous spirit, to be loaded with Contumelies, Reproaches, false Accusations. Taun-

ings, and Mockings; so the Child of God must resolve to fight with that enemy, in his way to heaven, and to go thorow evil

Report, and thorow Reproaches, Revilings, Slanders, Backbitings, and false Imputations. We can get no worse name,

than our Master got, who was called a Glutton and a Wine biber, yea a Devil and a Samaritane. (2.) They suffered in their

Persons; for they did meet with afflictions: the word in the original signifieth an oppressing or breaking stroke, a pressing evil, such

as beating, wounding, imprisoning, chain-
ing

24 The Scope and Words

ing, banishment and the like. For the verb, it cometh from, is used to signifie the pressing of grapes in the wine press, and that pinching and straitning, which a short or strait shoe cauſeth. How desirous so ever the flesh be of ease, and naturally we would shun every thing, that pincheth or paineth us; yet the child of God must lay his account, to meet with no small trouble, paine, torment, unease and pressure to his body, in following his duty, our Lords Worthies knew not much what ease meant, when they were tortured, scourged, bound and imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, slaine with the sword, wandered about in sheepskins, and goatskins, being destitute. afflicted, tormented, wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth Heb. 11: 35, 36, 37, 38. (3.) In their Honour they suffered, when as to both the former they were made a gazing stock. They were not privately backbitten, and slandered, or wounded in their names; nor privately beaten and oppressed: but publicly accused, and shamefully handled, brought as it were, to Scaffolds and Pillories, set upon publickly Theaters, and there exposed to all the publick Shame, Ignominy, Effront, Disgrace and Injuries, that malice could poure out against them, when made open spectacles,

cles, and *Theatrized*: 1 Cor. 4: 9. How dear so ever our honour and respect in a world be to us; yet that must be denied and forsaken for our Master: and we should account it our honour to be spoiled of all honour, for his sake; when He was publickly defamed and enjured, spit upon, openly upbraided and mocked, and publickly hung up upon a crosse, as the worst of Malefactors; should it trouble us much, if we be used as he was? Is it not enough for the Servant, that he be, as his Master? May not the same lot serve him? (4.) Moreover they suffered in *their goods*, for *they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods*: They were plundered, pillaged, robbed; and so must quite what they had gained by honest and lawful meanes, for a livelyhood to themselves and to their families and posterity. This then is no new thing, for the faithful followers of the Lord Jesus to be stripped naked of all their wealth; to have their goods eaten up and devoured by strangers, before their eyes; to have their States, Rents, Livlihoods taken from them, and they and theirs exposed to want and penurie: It is sufficient that Christ hath said Mark, 10: 29, 30. *Verily I say unto you, there is no man, that hath left house* — or
B lands

lands for my sake and the Gospels; but he shall receive an hundred fold, now in this time, houses — and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life. It is said of them here, to their great commendation, and to our Instruction, that they took this robbery, and spoiling of their goods joyfully; with a cheerfull minde, with rejoicing of heart, being glad they had goods, rents, houses, lands, or any thing they had gained with the sweat of their browes, to quite and lose for Christ, and his Cause and Testimony. It was no griefe or sorrow of heart to them, to be plundered of all; for it was matter of joy unto them, and they rejoiced that they were counted vworthie to suffer the loss of all things for the Name of Jesus, And the ground of this their ioy is added, *knowing in yourselves. that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring substance.* They comforted themselves, vvith the expectation of vvhat vvvas more then upmaking; they knevv of some substantial thing, every yvay better as to qualities, than any thing they could lose here; and of a more firme, lasting and abiding nature: it is more enduring, and surely kept; for it is in heaven. Beleevers then, hovver the vvorld

world judge, are no fools; Men think it follie and madnes, to suffer the loss of their lands and movables; yea or but to hazard the same, and thus to cast avway their goods, that have cost them so much labour and travail in the gathering, and thereby to expose themselves, their families and children to beggerie and want: but they know no better, they see not what a rich, saife, upmaking and everlastingly glorious inheritance they are looking for; and how they dar not hazard the loss or missing of that, for all they have in the world. He is no fool, even in the eyes of the world, who, to secure an heritable Kingdom or Earldome, will with joy suffer the loss of a penny: and he would be accounted a fool of the first magnitude, who, by keeping of one penny, would lose the sure hope and expectation of a rich and honourable inheritance. Hence we may also see, whether plundering and spoiling of goods should draw our eye, even upvard to view the length and bredth, the height and depth of the inheritance above, which is beyond the reach of plunderers and robbers, and which decayeth not, but endureth for ever; and whose in- comes are not yeerly, nor quarterly. but hourly and

every minute of endless, timeless, unalterable eternity. O what support, comfort and joy would the sight of this by faith, bring into the soul, under all its losses & hardships in a world? How would he sing for joy of heart, when the world is doing what it can to make him howle? How would he feast, while having neither to bite, nor to sup, and when stripped naked of all his wealth and riches, on the sure expectation and to-look of the better and more enduring substantial thing above, whereby he is already in possession, as it were, of it, as the original may be rendered, *knowing that you have in yourselves, &c.*

The second part of this sight of afflictions, which they endured, was partly *whilest they became companions of them that were so used*: of which he giveth one instance v. 34. *For ye had compassion of me in my bonds.* They interested themselves, & embarked themselves & took a share of the lot of others of the followers of Christ, who were made a gazing stock by Reproaches & Afflictions. They sympathized with them, being pierced with their pinchings, as if they had been their own, knowing that they were of the same body; and therefore, when
one

one member suffered, they all suffered; They did not disowne them, while in prison or in bonds, they kept not at a distance from them, either as unconcerned in them, or as ashamed of them, or as afraid to suffer with them; but openly and really manifested their brotherly sympathy in being bound with them that were bound, in visiting them in their imprisonments, and in supplying to their necessities; therefore said the Apostle of them Chap. 6: 10, *For God is not unrighteous: to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister.*

Now this sympathy and fellow feeling, this compassionating the case of other Sufferers, when we are free; this owning of sufferers in their sufferings, and kindly supplying of their wants, according to our power; this taking part with them, speaking to their defence, and in the defence of the cause, for which they suffer, the Lord looketh upon it, as a part of the great fight of afflictions, which we endure. What ever men, whom carnal wisdom teacheth to draw back, and secure themselves and their own peace and quiet, judge of such open and avowed

owning, sympathizing with and supplying of such, as are suffering for the Name of Jesus; yet the Lord accounteth much of it, and enrolleth such among his valiant souldiers, and fighters of his battels: And how little so ever it be, that they can do, by way of sympathie with and supply of such as are Sufferers; yet, when it is done in uprightness, out of Zeal for the cause, and according to their power, the Lord looketh upon it as a great matter, as a part of their fight of Afflictions. The consideration whereof should excite all, who would be ambitious of this honour, to lay out themselves to the outmost to testify their affection and sympathie with such, as are mocked and afflicted, for the Testimony of Jesus; and not to be ashamed of them, or their bands, On the other hand, we may be assured, that the Lord will put a far other and contrary construction upon, and give another judgment of such, as, whether out of fear, or carnal wisdom, draw back, and either discountenance and discourage such as are suffering, or do not, and say not, what they can and may, for the strengthening and encouraging of them, but are hideing their eyes from their own flesh, not remember-

remembering them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversitie, as being themselves also in the body Heb. 13: 3. but virtually and interpretatively, if not more formally and expressly, are siding with & approving the Persecuters, & condemning the Righteous. O that such would remember that, which Christ told us Mat. 25: v. 41. ——— 46. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand: depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirstie, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not ——— Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me, &c.

Before the Apostle speak to other grounds of encouragment unto a constant adhering unto the truth, notwithstanding of sufferings, he mindeth them of the end, and aime he had before him; or of the true tendency of what he was saying; and of the use and improvement they should make of his discourse *vers. 35 Cast not away therefore your Confidence. This therefore sheweth, that it is an inference na-*

32 The Scope and Words

tively flowing, from what he had been saying. And the matter he presseth them unto, is a fixed constancy in owning of the Truth, a standing by Christ, and his despised Truth and Cause: but the Words, wherein he expresseth this, are considerable. *Cast not away your confidence*; alluding to Souldiers, who, in utter despondency of heart, and despaire of out gate, cast away their very shield and buckler, wherewith they should defend themselves, that they may be in better case to flee, and shamfully desert the fight. He would not have them loseing it (as the *Syriack* translate the word) far less casting it away from them, as no more useful or serviceable to them; but would have them holding it fast, and imploying it for their security; for there is a *Meiosis* in the Words. And what is it he would have them thus keeping and using? It is their *confidence*, or *boldness*, (as the word signifieth, and is oft rendered) that is, their bold avowing & professing of the truth of the Gospel; being the same upon the matter, with what he expresseth elsewhere, in this same *Epistle*, in other words, as *Chap. 3: 14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end,*

end & Chap. 6: 11. *And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.* and in this same Chap. 10: 23. *Let us hold fast the Profession of our faith, without wavering.* And Chap: 12: 1. — *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* He would not have them quitting the cause, upon the account of any thing they were to meet with; but he would have them holding that fast, and fixedly standing to the profession of the truth, which they had embraced.

The inference of this from what the Apostle had said before, confirmeth what we formerly observed: and saith to us, That there should be a counter working of the designs of Satan, and of his Instruments; so that what they do of purpose to drive, by hote persecution, the Professours of truth from their stedfast adhering to the same, should make them the more fixedly resolute to hold fast their profession of the faith: the more hard the Devils winde bloweth, to spoile them of their vail of Profession, they should hold it the faster; as a man will hold his cloak the faster about him, that the winde blow hard. And next, That this is the Devils maine business, in all his assaults of

persecution, to brangle the faith of the Gospel, and to bring the Professours thereof to a shameful relinquishing of it, and of the open, and avowed Profession thereof which should cause his people, who would be found faithful to their Master, and would not willingly comply with Satans wicked designs; adhere the more constantly and stedfastly to the truth. *Thirdly*, That the abateing of, and falling from any measure of perswasion of the Truth of the Gospel, of Zeal for it, and of confidence about it, which formerly we have had, is a gradual and partial defection therefrom, and relinquishment thereof: for instead of saying. stand fast in the Profession of the truth, he saith, *cast not away your confidence.* Lose not, as if he would say, any measure of boldness, and confidence in avowing the truth, which you have had, for all you can meet with. When our Confidence and Boldness for the truth is not held fast, we have in part yeelded already, and are fair before the winde of temptation, to yeeld yet more. An abatement in this causeth an abatement in Courage and Resolution; and this maketh the man more weak and unable to resist: whence it will come to passe, that
the

the same temptation, that formerly could not prevail, will easily lay him upon his back. And therefore *fourthly*, we should not think it enough to be kept, in a day of temptation, and tribulation, from making full and formal defection, or from a plaine and manifest departing from the faith, once received: But our endeavour should be, let Satan and his Instruments rage as they will, to be kept in the same measure of perswasion of, and in the same fire edge of Zeal for the Truth, and Interest of Christ, without the least abatement of our Boldness, and Confidence, in and about his matters: For they are still as precious and lovely as ever, and should be as desirable to us; yea the more the Devil rage against them, and would have us renouncing them, the more should our esteem of them, and affection to them grow and increase: seeing if they were not excellent, the Devil would not so appeare against them; and if the adhering to the open avowed and confident Profession of them, and Appearing for them, were not much to the glory of God, and to our own Spiritual advantage, we would not need to fear Satans enmity to the one, and envie of the

other, so much as we have just cause to do.

He subjoineth immediatly a strong inducement unto this duty of holding fast their Confidence, by adding, *which hath great recompence of reward.* This, which we have rendred *Recompence of reward*, is but one word in the original, though thus rendered here and *Chap. 2: vers. 2.* and *11: 26.* and signifieth a *retribution*, or a recompence given by way of reward: By which we must not think, that there is any proper merite, in any thing we do, or that what God hath promised to such as endure to the end, is properly a recompence, or a reward; for when we have done all we ought or can, we are but unprofitable servants; But all is of free grace, and all purchased by Christ to his own: as the duty is performed in the strength of Christ; so the good promised to the performers of the duty, is purchased by, and had through Christ: and so the reward is but a reward of free grace, and no debt; and the word rather pointeth forth the certainty of the connexion betwixt the duty and the blessing, to be such as is betwixt work & wages with upright men, than any proper work

or

or merite in the duty : whence we may see (1.) That it is sutable to Gospel obedience , to be moved thereunto with the consideration of the rich , and upmaking reward of grace . that is at the back of it. *Moses* did so in the next *Chapter* v. 26. and *Christ* himself did so *Chap.* 12: v. 2. (2.) In trying times, and in dayes of difficulty , it is most seasonable, fit and useful for such, as would be kept honest, to be presenting before themselves, and taking a full & frequent view of what free grace that provided for them , at the end of the race; that hereby Satans faire offers may appear to be nothing ; they may see, how all their losses will easily be made up; and the sight of the recompence that is coming may inflame their desires after it; and this may lessen all difficulties in the way , and cause their strength , courage and resolution , grow; and so they may be in better case to wrestle thorow all opposition, and to stand fast to the end. (3.) The recompence of reward that awaiteth such, as stand fast in the faith , persevere to the end , keep fast their confidence , and their assurance of hope to the end , is no mean reward, it is called a great recompence of reward , and how great it is, who can tell? The Apostle
B 7 could

could not get expressions to make us understand it, nay nor *Hyperbole's*, and therefore he must tell us it is an eternal weight of glory above all *Hyperbole's*; so that one *Hyperbole* upon the top of another will not serve to hold it forth sufficiently: And we see what variety of expressions & Metaphors Christ useth, in his Epistles to *Asia Revel. 2. and 3.* to cause us understand something of it. And shall it not be a great reward, when it shall be no less, than the Rewarder himself? O if there were more of the lively hope & faith of this, this day! (4.) The losing fight of the rich and great recompence of reward, will contribute very much to a mans fainting, in the day of Adversitie, and prove a great hinderance to his holding fast his Confidence, and bold Profession of the truth. If it were not so, the Spirit of the Lord would not thus propose it, as an encouragment, not to cast away our Confidence. (5.) Though it might be a rich enough reward for us, to get that honour put upon us, to avow Him, and His Truth and Name, cost it us what it would: Yet, as the Lord will not have any run his errands upon their own charges; so neither will he have them serving him

him, for nothing; but how feckless and inconsiderable soever the greatest and most hazardous of their service be, in it self; yet he will look upon himself, as engag'd to reward the same, of free grace; not indeed with a recompence, corresponding to its worth; but with a recompence suiting his greatness. Therefore he hath appointed a great recompence of reward for such, as keep their confidence & are stedfast in their bold, & resolute avowing of him, in the midst of fiery trials.

He tels them moreover *vers. 36.* that they *had need of patience*, that after they had done the will of God, they might receive the promise: And this pointeth forth another encouragment, to the holding fast of their Confidence, and Profession; and with all obviateth an objection; For they might say, How long shall we hold fast our Confidence? Shall our life be a constant life of suffering and wrestling? shall we waite so long, so many yeers for the recompence of reward? He answereth, and withall driveth on his purpose of pressing them to Constancy and Steadfastness, by saying, *You have need of Patience*: Patience is a necessary grace, and very useful: and if your
trials

trials did not continue, you would have little or no use of it, or occasion for it; and the Spiritual exercise of this grace is of great use to make you stand fast, and hold your Profession firme; and your standing fast, and not casting away your confidence, is a good mean also to the exercise of Patience; and therefore he annexeth this to the preceeding *verse* with a *for*; so that these two worke sweetly together unto others hands: And withall, having spoken of the great recompence of reward, that did certainly awaite such, as did not cast away their Confidence; he tels them, that in reference to the getting Possession of that, they have need of Patience, the matter is lying yet wrapt up in a promise, and they must go on in doing the commanded will of the Lord, and that is, to stand to the Truth and the Profession thereof, and then receive the promised great recompence of reward, at the end, in Gods good time. Whence we see, (1.) That as patience in its exercise, in times of trial, is an adorning grace, much commending and setting forth the lustre and beauty of Christians; so is it of great use and profite, and a great helpe to perseverance and stedfastness in the truth:

Tribu.

Tribulation worketh patience; and because of that, the children of God should *glory in tribulation*. *Rom. 5. 3*, The trying of our faith worketh patience, and patience must have its perfect work; otherwise we cannot be perfect and intire, wanting nothing *Jam. 1: 3, 4*. An impatient Man will soon weary of the cross. (2.) Beside all the hundred fold, that is had in this life, with persecution, according to Christs faithful promise; and all that consolation that aboundeth, as the sufferings of Christ abound, by Christ *2 Cor. 1: 5*. there is incomprehensibly more yet reserved for such, as abide faithful unto the end: and it is laid up in a sure promise, and reserved for them, under the lock and key of the unchangableness and faithfulness of God. The Lord thinketh it best, not to give his valient Souldiers all their pay in hand, but so much only, as may serve their necessities, while fighting the battels of the Lord, and may keep them from fainting, and sitting up through discouragements and feares. (2.) The faith of this great recompence of reward will contribute much to the Christian and Constant exercise of Patience: And such, as would not miss that recompence in end, must now resolve upon

upon the exercise of patience ; for God hath laid up the inconceivably great reward in a promise , that their faith and patience may , in the meantime , be exercised: Therefore there must be no wearying of the crosse , nor fainting under the tryal : but the Beleever must look to the promise, and in patience possesse his soul, while the appointed time come , that the promised Crown shall be put upon his head , and he put in Possession of that Inheritance , that is incorruptible , and undefiled , and that fadeth not away , and is reserved in the heavens for him 1 Pet. 1: 4. (3.) Patient suffering and enduring of a fight of afflictions , for Christ and his Interest, and for avowing of his Truth, and standing to the open Profession thereof, in the midst of persecution, is a doing of the Will of God , and a noble act of royal obedience unto their Lord and King ; and a piece of their work of homage , and loyalty to their Sovereigne. He is then calling them to it , and laying commands upon them for that end : And therefore Impatience , and through Impatience a wearying of the cross , and a fainting under it , and a passing from the open avowing of Christ and his Truth, through fear,

fear, or love to ease and quietness, is a great act of disloyalty and disobedience to him, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. (4.) As the Lord will not have the service of his Servants unrewarded; so this firme connexion is not made betwixt the reward of grace, and begun service; but betwixt the recompence of reward, and the doing of the Will of God with patience, which is the same with that elsewhere, *he who endureth to the end, the same shall be saved* Mat. 10: 22. Therefore saith James Chap. 1: 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to those that love him.*

Having told them of a necessity for them to exercise patience, that hereby they might go on in doing the Will of God, and so in end receive the promise, that is, the good thing promised, he addeth *vers. 37.* as a ground for their patience, and as an encouragment to it, these words, *for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* If we look on these words, as relating to the then present state of these Jewes, & to what they were shortly to meet with, they point forth the great Catastroph, that was

was to come upon the whole Jewish Politie, Worshipe and State, according to what was, at several occasions, foretold by our Lord, and threatned to befall them. Their State and Land was to be ruined and laid waste, their Church and Politie was to be overturned, their Temple destroyed, and all their Levitical Administrations taken away: which also very quickly thereafter came to passe. But we may look further in it, and observe what that good was, which was to be brought alongs with, & effectually brought about by, this terrible coming of the Lord in wrath and judgment; and this was the full and sole establishment of the Gospel Administration, which many of the Jewes were bitter enemies against, and oppugning and persecuting by all means; and which others had begun to receive & professe, & now were departing from & forsaking; either in part by mixing therewith the Jewish Observations; or wholly, by following only their old way of worshipe: and which others were more seriously owning, whom here he is exhorting and pressing unto stedfastness in that way: as also the Lords appearing for them, to rid them out of thraldome, in his good time: and his deliver-
ing

ing of them finally out of all their troubles, temptations, trials and vexations, which they must lay their account to meet with, so long as they are here in a world. He seemeth in this, and in the following verse, to have his eye upon these words of the Prophet *Habbakuk Chap. 2: 3, 4.* *For the Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, waite for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold the soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith:* Yet he citeth them not word for word: but useth his own liberty, neither following the *Hebrew* text, nor the *70. Version*, nor yet the *Chalde Paraphrase*, (which were the only Versions, then in use among the jewes, at that time, in all things, satisfying himself with pointing at the likeness of the case, now intimate by him, and that signified by the Prophet, that the ground of pressing the same duties, and the carriage of the jewes now, which the Prophets words did hold forth then, might be manifest, & the more unquestionable; and all this for enforcing of the maine point, he is driving at here.

We shall not any further prosecute this matter, nor insist upon the explication
of

of the case, spoken to in *Habbakuk*, or of the words used there; but shortly follow forth the threed of the Apostles discourse here; which, as was hinted before, is to encourage them to Constancy, notwithstanding that they were yet to exercise their patience, and to waite for the accomplishment of the promise. Now, because unbeleef might prompt them to think, that it is long to the time, when the good things promised shall be actually bestowed, and that they might be made to waite long for the accomplishment of the promise, and not be the better; and so beginne to faint in their mindes, and yeeld to temptations, promising some seeming advantage in hand: therefore he subjoineth these words, to provent this mistake, and to remove this ground of fainting; telling them, that the promiser with the promise, or the good thing promised, in his hand, was not so far away, as they might possibly think, yet *a little while*, (the time is not long, it is a very short time,) the words in the original are most emphatick, to denote the inconsiderableness, and brevity of the time, It is a little time, a very little time (as the *Syriack* hath it) presently after a very little

little time, (as the *Arabick* hath it) *and he that will come, shall come, and will not tarry* (He, whom ye are called to look for, and expect as coming with his reward with him, will come, and is upon his march already? and he will not stay) Therefore, would he say, have a little patience, weary not, stand fast and look for him, he will be upon the enemies with judgment, and on his people with mercy, ere we be aware. Hence we may see (1.) That such is the weakness of the people of God, and so little is their faith, that God's delaying to come with the expected mercy and outgate, is enough to faine their hearts, howbeit, He remaineth faithful and true, and never faileth to come, in the appointed and fit season; and howbeit they dar not but say, that it is true: every day is as a year to them. (2.) This proceedeth from want of the due measure, or the due exercise of the grace of Patience: *You have need of Patience, for yet a little while and he will come.* (3.) Though the Lord cometh alwayes in due time, with judgments to his Enemies, and with mercies and deliveries to his People; and doth not circumduce his day; nor faile in his purposes or promises; yet he will not
always

alwayes come, just at that minute of time, that his people think he will come. He hath yet *a little while*: He must measure his owne times, & appoint his own seasons, & we must not think to cause him make haste, sooner than he hath determined; though we may cry to him, *to haste*, thereby expressing our deep sense of the danger, our earnest desire to have him appearing, our fear that we shall not hold out very long, but fainte if he helpe not, and our faith and hope that he will come. And he thinks good, his people should be kepted waiting in patience, and be taught submission to him, who doth all things well, and can time his own Mercies and Deliveries best: and therefore the time is sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, wherein they are called to this exercise of patience and waiting. (4.) Be the time of the Lord's delaying to come never so long, in our eyes; Yet Patience should be kepted in exercise, and have its perfect work; and we should not weary, nor fainte, as if either God had forgotten to be gracious, or had changed his purpose, or were either unwilling or unable to performe his promise. (5.) Whatever Temptation, and our unbelieving hearts say, the faithful
and

and righteous God and Saviour will come precisely, in his appointed season, and not one minute of time longer will he tarry, *He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

Now follow the words of the text. *Now the just shall live by faith.* In the Original it is *but the just shall live by faith*, the Syriack readeth it. *But the just shall live by the faith of me*, following the Translation of the 70. of these Words Habbak. 2: 4. the Vulgar Lat. readeth it *my just* (as do some Copies of the 70.) *liveth by faith.* The Arabick; *and the just liveth by faith*, the Æthiopick *But the just liveth by faith.* In the Original Habbak. 2: 4. it is, *and the just shall live by (or in) his faith.* Which the Arabick turneth very strangely, *and my righteousness liveth by faith.* But the Syriack better; *the just shall live by faith*: Yet leaving out the affix pronoun. Though that word, *now*, be not in the Original; yet the whole context, and the dependance of this *verse* upon the former, doth clearly import as much, as this word cometh to; for the Apostle having told them before, that they had need of patience, and therefore should not cast away their confidence; for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry: And in this meane while, till he come.

who will not tarry, and until this little while be over, the just man, who is now justified by faith in Christ, shall win to a life, and that through faith. And it may also signifie, that dureing that time, the just mans work and duty is, and will be, to live by faith. Now both these may be comprehended here, the one being subordinate to the other; and both keeping a just correspondence with the context and scope: as if he had said; notwithstanding of difficulties and temptations you may meet with, through the Lords short delay to come, yet you should not cast away your Confidence; but the rather keep that fast, for as you have need of patience, so you have need of faith, & this is a fit season for faith to be exercised in, and for the beleever, or just man, to be living by faith; and hereby such are beyond the hazard of perishing, for they shall have a life, even in that *interim*

The *just* here, is the man, who hath fled to Christ, and hath embraced Him, according to the Gospel, and that in truth and uprightness; and being covered with the righteousness of Christ, is accepted of the Lord, as a righteous Person; and is opposed to one, who having not sincerely engaged with Christ, but only by an out-ward

ward Profession, doth at length, when the scorching sun of persecution ariseth, draw back, (as the following words intimate) and to one, whose soul is not upright, but is elevated and lifted up through pride, and arrogance; as the words in *Habbakuk* import.

Shall live, that is, he shall be kept in the state of life, and shall not finally or fully fall away, as such do, who draw back unto perdition; but shall have a life of strength, support, comfort, and what else may serve to keep their head above water, while swimming thorow the sea of manifold Difficulties and Temptations; and carry them thorow, when others, whose heart hath not been upright with the Lord, shall perish by the way.

By Faith, or *by his faith*, (for though the Apostle doth not express the pronoun affix; yet it may easily be understood,) that is, by his constant acting of faith, upon the due Objects thereof, answering every exigent, and difficulty he may be into, while the little while is not yet at an end; feeding upon the promise, and sucking life and support out of that; and especially by holding fast and living upon Jesus Christ, who is the summe and extract of all the promises, in whom they are all

52 The Scope and Words

centred, and are *yea and amen* 2 Corinth. 1: vers. 20.

Now this being the meaning of the words, the Scope sheweth, as we did hint before, that this is said (which also the following words. *But if any man draw back &c. evince*) to point forth what should be their duty and exercise, while he, who shall come, is not yet come; even to live by faith; and what should be their advantage thereby; they should have a life of it, and should certainly be carried through by that meane: and therefore there being such a sure and saife way of thorow-bearing, and of arriveing at the port of life, notwithstanding of the Lords not yet coming, as they would expect, they should hold fast their confidence, and not fainte; for the time is but short, and He will come, and until he come, they should exerce their patience and faith; and this will keep them streight, to the saving of the soul; as it is vers. 29.

The words thus explained, and their interest in the context, together with their relation to the Scope manifested, they point forth these four things, to be spoken unto.

1. The proper time and season for the exercise of faith, which is here called for,
imported

imported in the subjoining of this , to what he said of their case before.

2. The Advantage, that is to be expected hereby, intimated in the word, *live*; they *shall live by faith*.

3. The persons, who may expect this advantage of life , the *just*; the *just shall live by faith*.

4. The mean, whereby this advantage is to be had and expected , by the just, in such a time , that is *faith*. *The just shall live by faith*.

CHAP. II.

The case here explained , and
the proper season of faith
cleared up.

WE come now to speak to the first of these fore mentioned particulars, pointed forth in this passage of Scripture , and which our Translators have more expressly indicated , by translating the particle , which usually signifieth *but* , *Now* : And , as was said , though this were not , the whole series of the Apostles discourse , and his connecting this verse with what

52 The Scope and Words

centred, and are *yea and amen* 2 Corinth. 1: vers. 20.

Now this being the meaning of the words, the Scope sheweth, as we did hint before, that this is said (which also the following words. *But if any man draw back &c.* evince) to point forth what should be their duty and exercise, while he, who shall come, is not yet come; even to live by faith; and what should be their advantage thereby; they should have a life of it, and should certainly be carried through by that meane: and therefore there being such a sure and saife way of thorow-bearing, and of arriveing at the port of life, notwithstanding of the Lords not yet coming, as they would expect, they should hold fast their confidence, and not faine; for the time is but short, and He will come, and until he come, they should exerce their patience and faith; and this will keep them streight, to the saving of the soul; as it is vers. 29.

The words thus explained, and their interest in the context, together with their relation to the Scope manifested, they point forth these four things, to be spoken unto.

1. The proper time and season for the exercise of faith, which is here called for, imported

imported in the subjoining of this , to what he said of their case before.

2. The Advantage, that is to be expected hereby, intimated in the word, *live*; they *shall live by faith*.

3. The persons, who may expect this advantage of life , the *just* ; the *just shall live by faith*.

4. The mean, whereby this advantage is to be had and expected , by the *just*, in such a time , that is *faith*. *The just shall live by faith*.

CHAP. II.

The case here explained , and
the proper season of faith
cleared up.

WE come now to speak to the first of these fore mentioned particulars, pointed forth in this passage of Scripture , and which our Translators have more expressly indicated , by translating the particle , which usually signifieth *but* , *Now* : And , as was said , though this were not , the whole series of the Apostles discourse , and his connecting this verse with what

went before by a particle, doth sufficiently lay down this ground of enquire, after the case, wherein they were, and after the season, wherein this duty is called for.

In the briefe explication of the several foregoing *verses*, which we gave, something of their case and condition may be seen; and the season, here pointed at, understood: and therefore we need not multiply words to that end: Only we shall give a short view thereof, so far as this *Chapter* will give us ground from *vers. 23.* and forward, resuming briefly, what was formerly said, that the case may be plaine.

Therefore I. We finde *vers. 23.* by the Apostles exhortation, saying, *let us hold fast the Profession of our faith, without wavering*, this hinted, That such were the times then, that there was no small hazard of falling from the Profession of the Truth, and of the faith of the Gospel, which they had received, and of wavering therein; partly through trouble upon the one hand and other, occasioned by a stedfast and zealous Profession and avowing of the same; partly through the fainting and falling away of others. They had embraced the Gospel, and so had either wholly, or in part
at

at least, laid aside the Observation of the Legal Institutions, which were but shadowes pointing forth and leading to the Substance, the true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who then was come; and because of this, they were exposed to many trials and temptations; some mocking them, as Apostates from Moses, and upon that account raising trouble against them; others falling off, and departing from the truth: These things and the like were ready to cause a cool in the Profession of many, so that they either fell or were in hazard to fall from their open Profession, and avowed owning of Gospel-truth.

2. Next, we finde one particular, as to the manner of this Profession, pitched upon *vers. 25. Not forsaking of the Assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is.* They had their publick Assemblies, for worshipping of the Lord, after the Gospel manner; and hereby they made open Profession of their owning of Christ, and the Gospel; and hereby they exposed themselves unto several trials and troubles, these Assemblings being possibly called and accounted unlawful Conventicles, condemned, maligned and opposed by the wicked jewes; and by the Romans also, in compliance with the jewes; so that they could not enjoy them in

peace and quietness: and withall there were some, partly out of fear, and to shun the trouble and disquiet, that they saw attending these meetings, whether in private houses, or in the open fields, or in secret Corners and Dens; partly being deceived by false Teachers, who were perverting the right wayes of the Lord; and partly en-duced by the evil example of others, who did renunce the Gospel, or did not zealously and steadfastly owne it, but fallowed a prudential way (as they thought) of pleasing all parties, and creating no trouble to themselves, that did turn their back upon these Assemblies, and forsake them: this was the manner of some. And this could not but prove sad and grievous unto the rest, to see themselves thus deserted, and the publick Assemblies forsaken, the Enemies thereby gratified, Christ Jesus dishonoured, their own hands weakened, and many thereby scandalized and much discouraged; and others tempted to depart likewise from the truth; and thus a way laid to the total renunceing of the whole Profession of the Gospel. Upon which accounts, it could not but be a very sad and an afflicting time, being a time both of much apparent trouble, and of multiplied temptations

3. By the Apostles exhortations here *vers. 24, 25.* we may observe another evil, that hath had too great prevalency and sway in those dayes: and that was, want of mutual Christian freedom, in speaking to one another, and stirring up one another to the duties of the day. *Let us consider,* saith he, *one another, to provoke unto love and unto good works:* and againe, *exhorting one another.* He would have them considering one another, taking strick notice of the way and walk of one another, that they may bring on a paroxisme of love and beneficence, that they may mutually warme one another unto a more then ordinary heate of love, and ardency of Christian affection and zeal for Christ, and the Profession of his truth; and so admonish one another to minde the duties of the day, and the work they are in a special manner now called to. Whence it may be inferred, that this mutual upstirring unto the zealous avowing of the truth, was much neglected; many growing indifferent, and lukewarme, and so satisfying themselves, with a superficial and slender owning of the truth; and in stead of exciting & encouraging others unto zeal, and zealous appearing for the truth of the Gospel, rather perswading them to a remissness, under the notion and

nickname of a way of wise prudence and sobriety. This must be a dreadful evil, when lukewarmness prevaleth among Professours, and they not only are not rubbing one another, untill they come to an high measure of Love to God and Man even to a paroxisme of love and of good works; but are rather cooling one another, and blunting the edge of one another, and teaching one another by word and example to be remiss, to lay aside their zeal, to walk after the rule of carnal prudence, to seek to please all, and to save their skin.

4. And this was the more sad, that many did thus carry, though they saw the day was approaching; that is, the day of the Lords coming to plead his Controversie, with the whole state of the Jewes; the day, that was foretold them, wherein their Temple, and all their Temple Worshipe, should be overthrown and destroyed, and the Gospel dispensation established: For he would have them thus provoking one another to paroxismes of love and good works, to Zeal for Christ and his cause, to a constant owneing and frequenting of the despised and hated and opposed Assemblies of Christians; to worshipe the Lord, according to the Gospel; and to a serious exhorting one another unto these duties, upon
this

this ground and motive, *and so much the more, that ye see the day approaching.* The plaine fore-runners, and manifest-toakens of this approaching day, were obvious to them: they saw the day was approaching, and the sight thereof should have kindled more zeal in them for Christ, and have weaned them more from the jewish Ceremonies, and have cooled their paroxisme of heat and zeal for them; and yet, it would appear, too many were never more zealous and bent for them, than they were then, when they could not but see, the day of overturning was at hand, wherein God would judge his Enemies, and be avenged upon them, and rid his owne people out of their trials and tribulations.

5. If we look forward to *vers. 32.* We shall finde that their present trouble was no new thing, they had been used with the crosse, from the very beginning of their embracing Christianity; and that they did, at the first setting forth, meet with a great storme, and had a great fight and battel of Afflictions; which he afterward *vers. 33, 34.* more fully brancheth forth and explaineth, It was then a time, wherein they had nothing to look for but Afflictions upon Afflictions, and a constant continueing life of Afflictions; and particular, as they had

been reproached and slandered, robbed of their honour and esteem, made gazeing stocks, exposed to open shame, and ignominie, and had their bodies enjured, and their health endangered, and also their goods and riches taken from them, and they exposed to penurie and want; so they could not but expect the continuance of such a life, and that still their names, their honours and reputation, their bodies, and their goods should be preyed-upon, and they put to suffer, in all these concernments, in owning of the Truth and the Testimony of Jesus: And beside all this, which did and would yet further befall themselves; there was the sufferings of their Brethren; which could not but affect and afflict them; and put them to straits, and possible to danger too, in laying out themselves, according to their power, in way of Sympathie and Compassion, for the supply of the necessities of such, as were, for the same cause, put to suffer in their names, bodies and goods; and for the owning of them and their cause; and contributing what they could for their support and comfort.

6. Upon the account of this continueing bitter life of multiplied Afflictions and Distresses, several, it is like, did fall off, grow fainte and weary, having no more patience

patience; and others were in hazard to follow their example; and instead of drawing an encouragement, from their former hard sufferings, and their deportment under them, they were ready to reflect upon them with a far other intent; to wit, to inferre therefrom, that it was their best to relinquish that way, whereby they were exposed to continual sufferings of all sorts; and that it was but folly to think they should be able to ride out all those stormes, that they could not but foresee; which might have been the occasion of that exhortation *vers. 35. Cast not away therefore your confidence, and againe vers. 36. For ye have need of patience, &c.*

7. The great reward, which they were looking for, and the hope and expectation whereof did encourage them to embrace the Truth, and to continue hithertil, in the Profession of it, was but yet to come, and was at present wrapped up in a promise; they were not possessed of it, but called to live by hope, and to comfort themselves, in the expectation of it: Therefore the Apostle told them *vers. 34. that they had a better and enduring substance, in heaven: And so could not enjoy that substance, or substantial good, so long, as they were here: And though the holding fast of their*

Confidence *had a great recompence of reward*,
Vers. 35. Yet it was at present lying in a
 promise, and they were not to expect it, till
 after they had done the will of God,
Vers. 36.

8. The delivery, which they were looking for, and the outgate of these present calamities and temptations, with which they were wrestling, which they were put in expectation of, was yet delayed: though he, who was to come, would certainly come, and would not tarry, beyond the due time; yet they behoved to have a little patience, for yet a little, a very little while, he would come, and make hast.

In short then, the time or season, here pointed to, wherein the just would and was to live by faith, was a time of sore and lasting trouble, distress, persecution and loss, for the truth of the Gospel, and for abiding in the open Profession, and Declaration thereof, by keeping their meetings for the Worshipping of God in Jesus Christ; together with other tryals, and temptations from the sight of the faintings, and defections of many Professours, and the fears of the falling away of others. And all this accompanied with a delayed delivery and outgate? The time then is a time, wherein *hope* and *patience* must be at work; then must

must *faith* also be at work, for without the exercise of faith, the exercise of the other cannot continue, y^e a nor be at all; If faith sinck, neither hope nor patience can swim. However, it is obvious, what a time that is, wherein Hope and Patience are called for, to wit, a time of the Lords delaying (as we may so speak) to give the outgate and reward in hand, that is promised and to be looked for; and that accompanied with distress, trouble and temptations.

Whence we see. That the people of God may be thus exercised; that is, have a sad and great sight of Afflictions, Trouble, Persecution, Reproach, Disrespect, open Effronts, Losses, Plunderings, Robbings, Temptations, Fears, Stumbling blocks, in the following of their duty, and in abiding by the open Profession of the Gospel of Christ, and by the Assemblies of the Saints, for the Worshipe of God, in Christ; and be looking-out for and expecting an outgate, & yet not obtaine for a time that which they look for, but be made to waite in hope, and to exercise their patience, and faith.

This Truth needeth no particular Confirmation, seing the experience of the Church of God, in all ages, from the beginning,

ginning, sufficiently recorded in the Scriptures of God, doth undeniably evince the same; not to mention the several Instances of particular beleivers, as to their own particular cases of suffering, and expected outgates, attested also and revealed to us by the Scriptures: That one Instance of the people of God, in *Egypt*, may serve for many: What afflictions and Oppressions they were under, for many yeers, the Scripture declareth; and little appearance saw they of any delivery, till *Moses* and *Aaron* came among them, and told them what was their errand from the Lord; the hearing of which was very refreshful, and made them bow their heads and Worshipe, *Exod. 4: 29, 30, 31.* But yet they were to waite a little while, the delivery was not yet to be; yea upon *Moses* and *Aaron* their delivering their Message unto *Pharaoh*, their bondage increased, and all their hopes evanished, and their delivery was further out of sight, than it had been before: for such was their anguish and distress, that the Officers of the Children of Israel went to meet *Moses* and *Aaron*, and said unto them, *the Lord look upon you and judge, because you have made our saviour to be abhorred, in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us,*
Exod. 5:

Exod. 5: 21. And Moses himself returned unto the Lord and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this people? Why is it, that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people, neither hast thou delivered thy people at all, *Vers. 22, 23.* And when againe the Lord sent Moses to the Children of Israel, and renewed the promise of their delivery, and of being put in possession of the promised Land of Canaan, according to the Promise and Oath, made unto Abraham. It is said *Exod. 6: 9.* They hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage: so little hope had they, or faith either, of the accomplishment of the promise: But after the little while was over, and the few dayes, wherein they were called to faith, patience and hope, they were wonderfully brought out of that house of bondage. And when Pharaoh and his host pursued after them, and they saw no way of escaping his murthering furie, having the sea before them, and mountains on every hand, how quickly did their hopes vanish? And where was then the accomplishment of the promise? When againe that difficulty was overcome, and several others, and they were brought unto the very Borders of Canaan, and could not
but

but expect Possession within few dayes; then the accomplishment seemed hard at hand; yet how quickly were they put againe to the long sands (as we say,) when they, because of their murmuring, were put to wander in the wilderness, fourtie yeers in end, ere they could cross the border of *Canaan*: and all these thousands, that came out of *Egypt*, were made to leave their carcases in the wilderness, and not a man of them (save *Josua* and *Caleb*) no not *Moses* himself, notwithstanding of his earnest desire, entered in to the promised land.

From which instance, we may take notice of these particulars, as to this delay of bringing about the promised mercy and outgate.

1. The promise may lye long under ground, and many years may passe, ere there be the least appearance of fulfilling of the promise: The Lord did promise to *Abraham*, that his seed should inherite *Canaan*, and yet four hundred and thirtie yeers passed over, before they were brought out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* 12: 41. according to what was said *Gen.* 15: 13, 14.

2. When the time of the promised outgate and delivery is even at hand, there may be little or no appearance, or humane proba-

probability, of any such thing: Before *Moses* and *Aaron* were sent unto the Children of *Israel*, to tell them, that the Lord had heard the cry of their Oppression and Bondage, and was coming to deliver them, nothing appeared, that did say unto them, that their delivery was at hand; and there is little ground to think, that they had the faith of that promise, made of old unto *Abraham*, in exercise.

3. Yea, even when the time of accomplishing the promise is at hand, not only may there be no appearance or likelihood of the same; but dispensations may be seeming to crosse and contradict the very promise; as if the Lord had forgotten his Promise; or had changed his purpose: was it not thus with the Children of *Israel*, when they were under such Bondage and Oppression, and when a way was laid, that should certainly tend to their utter ruine; for with their own hands they were made to destroy all their male Children, which had a direct tendency unto their extirpation.

4. There may be great and well grounded hopes of a quick and speedy delivery; and yet before the delivery beginne, matters may be brought unto a more desperat like passe; and thereby all hopes vanish:

as

as when after the people of Israel were assured, that the Lord had heard their cries and was about to deliver them, their Bondage grew greater than ever, and they were made to wish, that *Moses* and *Aaron* had never come among them.

5. The Lord may be about to beginne a delivery promised, and put his people in the expectation thereof, and give them sure, and unquestionable grounds to beleve it; and yet for a considerable time keep them tossed betwixt hope and feares: as the people of Israel were, when *Pharaoh* seemed sometimes to be inclined to let them go; and immediatly his heart was hardened, that he would not let them go; and upon a new stroke, he seemed againe willing, and presently when the judgment was over he returned to his former unwillingness and peremptory refusal.

6. The Lord may come with a delivery at the precise time appointed, and give a very faire and promising beginning: and yet hide his way of carrying on the begun delivery unto perfection, and order matters so, in his holy and wise dispensations, as that the fulfilling of the promise shall be more improbable, then ever: The people went out of *Egypt*, even all the hosts of the

the Lord, & they were delivered from under the hand of that Tyrant, with a strong hand, and with an out stretched arme; yet how quickly did their case seem desperate, when *Pharaoh* with all his horses, and charrets, horsemen and army, pursued after them, while encamping by the sea; and they cried out, and said unto *Moses*, *Exod. 14: 11, 12* *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? &c.*

7. The Lord may in a signal & remarkable manner beginne a delivery; and yet see it fit and expedient not to take the neereſt way to perfect the begunne delivery: When the Lord had caused *Pharaoh* yeeld unto the peoples departure, and they were delivered from under his hand, in order to their going to possess the promised Land of *Canaan*, there was a neer way betwixt *Egypt* and *Canaan*, through the Land of the *Philistines*, by which they might have arrived at the Land of *Canaan*, within a few dayes; yet (it is said *Exod. 13: 17, 18.*) *God led them not thorow the way of the Land of the Philistines, although that was neer — but God led the people about, thorow the way of the wilderness of the red sea.*

8. When a delivery is begun, many stops may be put unto its accomplishment, and
many

many yeers may interveen betwixt the beginning and finishing of the delivery: The Children of Israel were made to wander in the wilderness full fourty yeers, and all these yeers interveened betwixt their coming out of Egypt, and beginning to get Possession of the promised land of *Canaan*.

9. A delivery may seem to be at the very point of a full accomplishment; and yet emergents may fall in, that may cause a delay for many yeers: as when the Israelites were brought so neer to *Canaan*, that they sent the spies to search out the land, and were in faire hope to have entered therein shortly; but yet they murmuring, because of the false and discouraging report of the most part of the spies, that were sent, provoked the Lord to bring them back againe unto the waste howling wilderness,

10. Many may see the dawning of the day of a delivery, that shall never come to see the meridian, and the perfection of that begun mercy: Thousands came forth of *Egypt*, who left their carcases in the wilderness, and never saw the Land of *Canaan*,

11. Some may be eminently useful, in the beginning of a delivery, and eminently

nently honoured and signally owned of the Lord, in the dawning of a day of delivery, who may be laid by before the Copestone be put on; and notwithstanding of their earnest importunitie to see the work crowned, may not obtaine their desire; as we see in *Moses* and *Aaron*, two most instrumental, and signally owned of the Lord, in the bringing of the People out of *Egypt*, who yet got not the honour to trade in the Land of promise: And though *Moses*, that eminently faithful Servant of God, besought the Lord, and said (*Deut. 3: 23, 24: 25.*) O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy Servant, thy Greatness and thy mighty Hand ——— I pray thee let me go over and see the good Land, that is beyond *Jordan*, that goodly Mountaine and *Lebanon*. Yet it is said, *vers. 26, 27.* That the Lord was wroth with him for their sakes, and would not hear him; and said unto him, let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of *Pisgah* ——— and behold it with thine eyes: For thou shalt not go over this *Jordan*.

12. After many wonderful appearances of the Lord, in carrying on the great work of delivery and mercy, promised and begun; and all things taken out of the way of the full accomplishment, that was long expected: yet his people may be called to
a fighting

a fighting life; and not enjoy the accomplished delivery, without much wrestling fears and fightings: when the people of Israel were brought over Jordan, in a wonderful manner, after the defeat and overthrow of Og and *Sibon*, and the peaceable Possession of their Countrey; they were to engage in new warlike disputes, and dispute, as it were, every foot of the ground; and to fight with all those *Canaanites* and inhabitants of the Land, full six years in end, before they could come to the peaceable Possession of the same.

Thus we see, what way the Lord thinketh good to exercise his people. And such dealing often is procured by the sinnes of his people, according to that *Jerem.* 5: 25. *Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sinnes have withholden good things from you.* And that *Eesai.* 59: 1, 2. *Behold the Lords hand is not shortned, that he cannot save; neither is his care heavie that he cannot bear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* And as we see frequently, in the forementioned Instance. See in special Numb. 14: v. 27, — 36. And this one Consideration should stop our mouth, and put us from any further enquire, after the Reasons of the Lords following such a way.

Yet,

Yet, howbeit it should satisfie us, and be an answer unto all our enquiries after the Causes of the Lord taking such a course; to know, that so it seemeth good in his eyes, who is free to bestow his favours and mercies, in what Time, and after what Methode and Manner he will; and that how blinde so ever we be, and ignorant, in this matter; yet he is the only wise God, and doth all things well, and wisely, according to the Counsel of his own will. We may safely consider, what is the native language, and designe of such a dispensation; to the end, we may, in the frame of our hearts, and as to our comportment, comply with it sweetly.

For this end therefore, let us take notice of these Particulars, as the designe of such a Dispensation, that we, by our unanswerable carriage, may not frustrate this Holy Designe.

First, Hereby, as the Mercy long-looked-for is the welcomer, when it cometh, and is the more prized and valued, (for what lightly cometh, lightly goeth, as we say) So the Fidelity, Truth and Unchangableness of God is hereby the more observed, and made remarkable: It is then seen, when after long waiting, the promise is made good, that the Truth of God

is great unto the clouds, *Psal.* 57: 10. and 108: 4. and 36: 5. and that his Faithfulness is great *Lam.* 3: 23. and is unto all Generations *Psal.* 119: 90. so that no delay, no revolutions or changes, no alterations in Generations, can cause the least change in Him. Thus he magnifieth his word of promise, above all his Name *Psa.* 138: v. 2. There are two things that contribute unto the setting forth and exalting of the Truth, and Faithfulness of God, at such a time, the one upon the part of the Enemies, and the other on the part of God's own People. The Enemies wax the more proud and insolent, providence seeming to faveure them, and smile upon their counsels; and so take encouragment from the Lord's delaying to appear for his People, to continue in their oppressing courses; saying, God hath forsaken them, persecute and take them, for there is none to deliver them; as *David's* enemies said of him *Psal.* 71: 11. They use to mock and taunt his People, and to cast up this their confidence and hope unto them; saying, where is the God, upon whom you have relied; your Confidences are vaine? Where is He of whom you said, that He would come and save? as they upbraided Christ, while upon the crosse, with this, *He trusted in God, let him deliver him*

now,

now, if he will have him, Mat. 27: vers. 43. Psal. 22: 8. There useth to be scoffers (as Peter speaketh 2 Pet. 3: 4.) walking after their own lusts; and saying, where is the promise of his coming? So upon the other hand, his own people are not far from questioning the truth of the promises, and from saying, that all men are liars, as David did in his haste Psal. 116: 11. and are desponding through faithlesness, and saying with the Psalmist Psal. 77: 7, 8, 9. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.* Now, when matters are thus; No flesh expecting or looking for his coming; enemies free of the fear of it, and his own people void of the faith and hope of it, his coming and appearing is the more glorious & remarkable, as being the more surprising. Hear what the Church said Psal. 126: 1, 2, 3. *When the Lord turned againe the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; we are glad. The mercy being so little expected and looked - for, when it came,*

filled all with amazement, and constrained very Heathens to say: *The Lord had done great things for them.* There was then a remarkable greatness seen in the mercy.

Secondly, Hereby are the graces of Gods Spirit in them brought to the trial, and put to further exercise.

As 1. Their *faith* is hereby tried and exercised: now it is seen, whether they have faith, or not; whether they can hang upon an haire of the promise, and over the belly of much improbability, many difficulties, many disappointments, yet cleave to the word of promise, and rely upon the pure Word of God: Then it will be seen, who have faith, who not & who have faith in exercise, who not: God will certainly avenge his own elect, and that speedily *Luk. 18: v. 8.* and yet Christ addeth, *never the less, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he finde faith on the earth?* Thus are they called to the exercise of pure faith, to a relying on the faithfulness of God, as *Abraham* did *Rom. 4: 19, 20, 21.* And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred yeers old; neither yet the deadness of *Sarabs Womb*: He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbeliefe, but was strong in faith giving glory to God: and being fully perswaded, that what he had promised, he

he was able to performe. But of this exercise of faith, we shall speak more hereafter.

2. Their Hope is hereby tried and exercised: then it is found, who can in hope believe against hope, as is said of Abraham, Rom. 4: 18. who can swim, with their head borne up above the water by hope, against both tide and stream; This is the proper season for hope: *For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience waite for it*, Rom. 8: vers. 24, 25. How oft is it found, a such a time, that many are saying with the Children of Israel, Ezek. 37: 11. *our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts.*

3. Their Patience likewise is hereby tried and exercised. Now is the time of patience; *You have need of patience*, said the Apostle vers. 36. Hope is accompanied with patience; for we heare of the *patience of hope*, 1 Thes. 1. 3. and the *trial of faith worketh patience* Jam. 1: 3. and *patience must have its work, its perfect work*, vers. 4. Many a time we grow impatient, under his delays; and this occasioneth fretting & repining, when we should be patient in wait-

ing for Christ, *2 Thes. 3: vers. 5.* and should, according to that *Psal. 37: 7. Rest in the Lord, and waite patiently for him; fret not thy self because of him, who prospereth in his way, because of the man, who bringeth wicked devices to passe.* He thinketh good to suffer the wicked to prosper, and to delay his coming to overturn their courses, and to deliver his people, that they may learn patience, & do as David did *Psal. 40: 1. I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, & heard my cry: Abraham, after he had patiently endured, obtained the promise Heb. 6: 15.*

4. Their grace of *waiting*, which alwayes accompanieth *patience*, or is rather *patience* drawn-out to its just duration, is hereby also tried and exercised: Then it is seen, who dar not say, *this evil is of the Lord, why should I waite any longer?* We are oft hasty, & would avenge our selves; and will not, or cannot waite Gods time and leasure. Say *not thou*, (said the wise man *Prov. 20: 22.*) *I will recompense evil: waite on the Lord; and he shall save thee.* That was a noble resolution of the Church *Micah. 7: 7. Therefore I will lock unto the Lord, I will waite for the God of my salvation.* And what a time this was, the preceeding verses, from the beginning of the Chapter, show, and of *Esaïas* in a case not unlike *Esaï. 8: 17. And I will wait*

wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the House of Jacob, and I will look for him. See the like Psal. 123. The Church was exceedingly filled with the scorn of those, that were at ease, and with the contempt of the proud, vers. 3, 4. And what doth she resolve upon? Vnto thee lift I up mine eyes; behold, as the eyes of servants are unto the hand of their masters, as the eyes a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill that he have mercy upon us v. 1, 2.

5. *Their Submission.* a sutable and commendable grace, is at such a time as this tried also and exercised, How oft doth the corruption of our hearts prompt us to a Rebelling against the Lord, when we meet with disappointments; our fretting and repineing say, that our hearts do not say, *the will of the Lord be done*; and that our wills are not brought to bow and yeeld unto the holy and wise will of God. We would rule and governe all ourselves; and have all things absolutely at our disposal, and do not sweetly complye with the Holy Will of God, and subject ourselves in all points thereunto. And the Lord by his delaying discovereth this, and bringeth it to light, which otherwayes might lye long hid and undiscerned, and so be little mourned for: And by thus discovering our sin, he pointeth forth the

contrary duty, and putteth to a minding and studying of it, that we may carry, as acknowledging him alone to be God, and absolute Sovereigne; who may come and bestow his favours, after what manner, and in what time, he seeth good; who, as he hath absolute Power, so he is only wise, and can time things best.

Thirdly, Hereby he sets them to and keepsthem in the exercise of several duties.
As

1. *To a serious studie of his word of promise*, That hereby faith and hope may be fed and strengthened: This is a consulting of the Oracle of God, and an allowed prying into the revelations of his mind: thus were the Fathers and Prophets of old exercised, in reference to the promised Salvation, in and through the promised Messiah, as Peter tels us, 1 Pet. 1: 10, 11. *of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, wh^o prophesied of the grace unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signifie, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* Daniel also searched books, even the prophecie of *Jeremiah*, to see when the captivity would end, *Dan. 9: 2.*

2. This Instance of *Daniel* mindeth us of another

another duty, called for by such a Dispensation; and that is, *Instant prayer and supplication*: As we see in *Daniels practice, Chapt. 9.* The Lords delayings are not to cause us grow slack in our duty of prayer; but rather to make us double our diligence, and to set our face unto the Lord, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting and sack cloth and ashes, *Dan. 9: 2.* The Lord loves to have his people wrestling with him by prayer and supplication: that is a remarkable word *Cant. 2: 4.* *O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret of the stairs; let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice; and thy Countenance is comely.* He loveth to have them wringing, (as it were) a mercy, that he mindeth to give, out of his hand; as parents love to have their children wringing an apple out of their hands: hence, when he mindeth to bestow a favoure on his Church, or on a person, he usually poureth out a Spirit of Prayer upon his own, more at that time, than before: For he will be enquired of the House of Israel, for the mercies he hath promised, and mindeth to bestow *Ezek. 36: 37.*

3. By this Dispensation he calleth to the study and exercise of *Repentance*, and of *godly Sorrow*; and for this end, to a searching

of our wayes; that the sight and sense of them might lay us in the dust, and cause us think of that duty of Repentance, and turning againe to the Lord; for this is his usual methode. Therefore to move *Judah* unto this exercise, that the evil day might be prevented, that otherwayes would certainly come upon them, He sets *Jeremiah* a proclaiming to *Israel*, who were long since carried away to *Assyria*, peace and restoration, and many great and glorious favours, on condition of their Repentance, saying *Jer. 3: 13. Onely acknowledg thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, &c.* *Jeremiah* taught this exercise to the people, while in captivity in *Babylon*, *Lam. 1. vers. 4. Let us search and try our wayes, and turn againe to the Lord.* And the Lord giveth this lesson also by *Hosea Chap. 14: v. 1, 2, 3.*

4. So are they called hereby unto the exercise of *humility*, and a stooping under the holy and righteous hand of God, acknowledging that He is righteous and just in all his wayes, and that we are punished less than our iniquities doe deserve. Thus did *Jeremie* also teach the people to carry, in the captivity *Lam. 3: 22. It is of the Lords mercies, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. Wherefore doth a living man*

man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? The Lord did promise this, 2 Chron. 7: vers. 14. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turne from their wicked wayes; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. See 2 Chron. 12: vers. 6, 7. and 33: vers. 12. That duty pressed by Peter 1 Pet. 4: vers. 6. is especially called for, at such a time as this, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: And this also pointeth forth God's usual methode of exalting such, as he hath laid low by affliction; to wit, after they have humbled themselves under his hand, and taken with the punishment of their finnes, and are ascribing the glory of holy Justice and Righteousness unto the Lord, and made to wonder at his rich mercy, that he hath not made an utter end of them, and consumed them off the face of the earth.

Fourthly, The Lord thinketh good to follow this way, that his people may get deeper impressions both of what they are themselves; and of what an one He is: Hereby they have fair occasion to study and be impressed with the sense, and thoughts of their own vileness, hardness of heart,

D. G. inge.

impenitency ; and great unworthiness : As also to get suitable thoughts of God , in his absolute Sovereignty , impressed on our hearts , that we may be far from limiting the holy One of Israel , and from prescribing times , or wayes , or methods unto Him ; and look upon all , as acts of soveraigne free Grace.

Fistly , By this meanes , the Lord discovereth the sincerity of some , and the hollow-heartedness of many ; and also the weakeness of not a few . When trials continue , and years passe over , many harvests and summers , and no delivery cometh ; then it will be seen , who will adhere unto the Lord , and who not : Some , it may be , would not beleieve that they had faith in God , or love to Him ; but when Afflictions are laid upon their loins , and many yeers go over their head , without any appearance of an outgate ; and yet for all that , they cannot be enduced to depart from the Lord , or turne their back upon his Cause and Interest ; then their faith and love will appear to be what it is . Others would possibly hold out a trial for a few dayes , and if they thought that the Lord would returne with mercy and loving kindness , within a few moneths . or within a very few yeers : but when yeer after yeer ,
the

the trouble continueth, and no outgate appareth, so much as probable, their hearts faint, and their strength faileth them, and they can stand out no longer: a long lasting trial is a searching discovering thing; so that thereby some will see and be convinced of their own weakness, who would take with no such conviction before, but thought they could ride-out the storme, as long as others. We may see what a continueing temptation was like to do, and did in a great part, unto the Psalmist, Psal. 71: when he said *vers. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in innocency.* Others, in whom is not the root of the matter, though shame, and love to a name, and some such like corrupt and selfish Considerations, may pr. vaile with them to ride out a short storme; whom the Lord will discover, by delaying the dawning of the day of his returne, and of his overturning the way of the wicked: a longer time of trial will discover the rottenness of the heart of many a Professour, who in the beginning of the storme seemed stout, and as ready to continue to the end, as others. And *fourthly*, Enemies are hereby more discovered; for the longer the Lord delayeth, in his Providence, he seemeth to shine more upon their Counsels; so that

what at first they did much doubt of the lawfulness of, though the wickedness of their heart did drive them on to it, they become, through the snare of prosperity, more confirmed in; and thereby also more deeply rooted in their Opposition to the wayes of God, and further off from the reach of any conviction. So also this occasioneth their growth in malice, rage and opposition; for then they have no fear, or apprehension that ever there will be a change; and hereby they are encouraged to give vent to all that latent cruelty and pure enmity, that, if the day of their prosperity had been short, or they had feared a sudden change, they would have in a great measure suppressed. Thus also the Lord granteth time to the *Amorites*, to fill up their cup, which, because large, and because the Lord mindeth to proportion the vials of his wrath thereunto, he, in his holy Justice, suffereth them to prosper a long time, for this end; that the world may see, how righteous He is in their Destruction, when they have heard of their cruelty, and rage against the people of God, for so long a time.

Sixthly; Hereby the Lord is preparing his people for the mercy intended; and a few yeers will not serve to this purpose: Many

corruptions are cleaving so fast unto them, that no less will rub these off, than the sharpe file of affliction for many yeers together. So wedded are they unto the world, and to the Pleasures, Profites, and other Inticements thereof, that they are not soon weaned therefrom, nor can their Affections be gote soon cooled thereunto. Much formality and deadness, through long prosperity, groweth and taketh deep root in them; and a short time of trial will not purge them sufficiently therefrom: Pride and self conceite doth make them swell to a too great bigness to be cured in a few dayes. Humors have grown fast, and have gote a deep seate in them, that gentle purges will not serve to purge them away: They must be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and to this end, they must be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness *Coloss. 1: 11, 12.* If the delivery and outgate came, ere they were humbled, for their former sinnes and provocations, neither would the mercy have its due esteem with them; nor could they be duely thankful therefore; nor could they make a right use thereof; but by abusing of it, and turning Gods grace into wanton-
ness.

ness and lasciviousness, bring more guilt upon themselves, and thereby hasten a more dreadful change, and draw sader strokes out of the Hand of God.

Seventhly, The Lord is hereby carrying on a work of judgement; punishing many for the abuse of the former dayes of peace and prosperity, which they have enjoyed; and for their unsutable carriage, in the day, when the storme began to blow: The people of Israel were to wander fourtie yeers long in the wilderness, untill all that generation, that came out of Egypt, and provoked the Lord by their impatience and unbeliefe, should die therein. Therefore will the Lord prolong the dark night, until few or none of those, who have seen the great and wonderful works of the Lord, be left to see the foundation of the New Temple laid. He hath a controversie with a sinful Generation, that have corrupted their waies, and fallen from their first Love and Zeal, and he will plead that with them, and delay the delivery, until he hath sweep-ed them off the face of the Earth; that others may take warning, and fear to walk in the footsteps of their Fathers.

Eightly, As the Lord is calling his people in that day, to waite; so He is waiting that he may be gracious, *Esai. 30: 18.* And there-

therefore will the Lord waite that he may be gracious unto you: and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you, &c. He is waiting untill the fit time, season and opportunity come, wherein His hand will be most seen and remarked, his faithfulness, power and grace most observable: as when the Enemy is highest, and most secure, and in their own apprehension. and in the apprehension of all, who reasone according to humane probability, furthest from any hazard of being turned up side down, and are insulting most over the people of God, and behaving themselves strangely, and saying, our hand, and not the Lord's, hath done all this *Deut. 32: v. 26, 27.* And when his people are lowest, their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left, *vers. 36* He is waiting until he have performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem; and then will he punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks, *Eesai. 10: v. 12.* Thus the Lord is a very present help in trouble *Psal. 46: 1.* Even when he seemeth to delay longest, he is hastening: for he is making all ready against the fit season; and is awaiting that day and hour, wherein his appearing shall be most to his own glory, and to his peoples real advantage, as
also

also unto the greater confusion of his Enemies.

The Consideration of these things , should have this double effect upon us.

First , We should hereby be induced to guard against these evils , that we are most ready to be transported with , at such a time. Such as (1.) *Faithlesnesse* , causing us doubt and questione if ever the Lord will returne , and build up his Zion , and take his power to him againe and reigne ; even though this be the peculiar and proper Season , wherein faith should act most lively and distinctly. *If ye will not beleieve , surely ye shall not be established* , said *Esaies* , Chap. 7: 9. and it was good King *Jehosaphats* advice to the people , when the Children of *Moab* and *Ammon* were come against them *2 Chron. 20: 20.* — *beleieve in the Lord , your God , so shall you be established ; beleieve his Prophets , so shall ye prosper.* (2.) *Fretting* , *grudging* and *repineing* , at the Lords delay ; which is the bitter fruite of our pride , however we may colour it over , with faire pretexts of Zeal for his glory , and an earnest desire to see his Kingdom comeing : Though we may so far smother this , as that it shall not appeare in our words and speeches ; yet He , who searcheth the heart and reins , may espie much of it lying and working there.

(3.) *Faint-*

(3.) *Fainting*, *Despondency of spirit*, and *fincking through discouragement*: As if there were no hope, men as if they were travelling with Childe, every man with his hands on his loynes, as a woman in travel: And all faces turned into paleness. As it is *Ier. 30: 6.* And why? Because it was the time of Jacobs trouble, and the day was great, and there were none like it, as it is *vers. 7.* And yet there was no cause for this, because it is added; but he shall be saved out of it. And againe *vers. 8.* For it shall come to passe in that day, saith the Lord of hostes, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bands; and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. (4.) Hence followeth another evil, to wit, *Impatience*, and *wearying*; which maketh way for a sinful departing from the right way of the Lord; and for a compliance with the wicked in their prosperity; or for a detestable neutrality or indifferency in the wayes of the Lord. This is a putting out of the hand to sin, that we should in an especial manner guaird against, in such a day; for it is the thing the Devil mainly intendeth and driveth at, by his working together with the workers of iniquitie, his Instruments and Servants, in that designe. 5. We would beware of a *sinful hastening*, another fruite of *impatience* and

and unbeleeve; for he, who beleeueth, doth not make haste, *Eesai. 28: 16.* as one ashamed and put to confusion; as the words are rendered in the *New Testament, Rom. 9: 33.* and *10: 11. 1 Pet. 2: 6.* And this hastning appeareth in our readines, to complye with sinful meanes and overtures, promising either an outgate, or a more tolerable life under the Affliction; whereby, in stead of any reliefe, we wreath the yoke of bondage more straitly about our necks. (6.) We would beware of limiting the holy one of Israel, as the Israelites did in the *Wildernes Psal. 78: 41.* whether it be unto a time, when he should deliver us; or unto the manner, how; or unto the instruments and meanes by which. Shall we think to lay commands on him, as to things to come; concerning his Sones, and the work of his hands? Shall we thus strive with our Maker? See *Eesai. 45: 11.* where the words should be better read interrogativly, by way of challenge thus, *Thus saith the Lord, the holy one of Israel and his maker, do ye ask me of things to come, concerning my sones and the work of my hands, will ye command me?* And from the Context it is plaine, that he was hereby putting them from quarreling at his way, in bringing about their delivery out of *Babylon*, by *Cyrus* a stranger; whileas, it is like, they would

would rather have had it done by themselves, that they might share in the glory. (7.) We would beware of continueing in old sinnes, which have procured the stroke, at the hands of the Lord: That was is it, whereof *Jeremiah* complaineth *Chap. 5: 3.* O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to returne. And this will but binde the yoke more upon us, and make our case worse *Eesai. 9: vers. 12, 13.* ——— For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still: And why? For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts. And it will provoke the Lord to punish us yet seven times more, and that foure times told. See *Levit. 26: 18, 21, 24, 28.* (8.) We would beware of adding new sinnes unto our old; for thereby we shall but bring on upon ourselves new judgments, in stead of being freed from the old. We know what provoked the Lord to cause the people of *Israel* wander in the wilderness fourtie yeers: but withall, their other sins made their life far more bitter, than otherwise it would have been; for thereby they brought upon themselves, many

many waſting ſtrokes. They committed fornication; and for that cauſe, there fell in one day three and twenty thouſand: They tempted Chriſt, and were deſtroyed of Serpents; they murmured, and were therefore deſtroyed of the deſtroyer: and all theſe things hapned unto them for enſamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come 1 Cor. 10: 8, 9, 10, 11.

Secondly, We would endeavour after a right frame of ſpirit, under ſuch a Diſpenſation, whereby in the whole frame of our ſoul, and in our whole deportment, we may comply with the Lords Deſignes, in that Diſpenſation: And ſo (1.) Conſider the voice and language of that Diſpenſation, hear what it ſaith *Micah. 6: v. 9.* and read what is written thereupon; for frequently it is found, that the roſe hath the ſin, that procured it, written on its back, either more darkly, or more diſtinctly and legibly: It were a ſutable work and ſtudy, in ſuch a day, to be ſearching-out iniquities, and enquireing after the Cauſes of the Lords Indignation and Wrath, with a purpoſe, after diſcovery made, to repent of them, and relinquish them, that the Lord might haſten his return. (2.) Minde the exerciſe of thoſe graces, which ſuch a diſpenſa-

penfation calleth for , and were formerly mentioned. (3.) We would alfo comply with the Lords Defigne , in this Difpenfation , as to the duties , formerly mentioned , and efpecially called for at fuch a time. (4.) When he is making difcoveries hereby , whether of our own weaknefs , or of the weaknefs of others; or of the rage and cruelty of Adverfaries, let us not murmur , nor grieve; but adore and fubmit; give him glory , and let us lay our hand upon our mouth. (5.) Is he purging and purifying the Sones of *Levi*? Is he cafting his Church in the fire , that ſhe may be purged from her drosse; let us comply with that defigne , and not finfully defire to be out of the furnace , till our drosse and tinne be removed. Should not we fuffer him to purge his floor? *Mat. 3: 12.* and to purge the Sones of *Levi*, as Gold and Silver; even though he ſhould be like a refiners fire , and like fullers ſope, ſo that none may abide the day of his coming , or ſtand when he appeareth; ſeing all this is that they may offer unto the Lord , an offering in righteouſneſs; and their offerings may be pleaſant unto the Lord , as in the dayes of old, and as in former yeers. *Mal. 3: 2, 3, 4.* The Conſideration of that , which we have *Eſai. 4: 3, 4, 5.* ſhould quiet our ſpirits:

rits: And it shall come to passe, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the Daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the Spirit of judgment, and by the Spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoak by day, and the shineing of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory a defence. Should it not make our souls quiet, and cause us sweetly acquiesce, when we read *Eesai. 27: 9.* By this therefore sha'l the iniquitie of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin? Should not the consideration of this cause us say with the Church, *Micah. 7: v 9.* I will beare the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him? and sing upon the account of what we read *Ezek. 20: 37, 38.* And I will cause you to passe under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant; and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me, &c. (6.) If he be preparing us for a mercy, and putting us in case to improve and make a good use of a mercy and of a delivery, when it is given, why should we not comply with this? Why should

should we not comply with this? Why should we not be a co-worker with God in this? What would a delivery do to us, if we were not fit for it? We may get our desires granted, and He may send leanness withall into our souls *Psal. 106: 15*. And where will be our Advantage then? If we had a delivery, ere we were in good case for it; how long would it prove a delivery unto us? Is a Body full of gross humors fit to receive and get advantage by Cordials? Would not these contribute to the increasing of the sickness? If then the Lord, the only wise Physitian for Souls, and for Churches, think it best to give us purging potions, and hold us under a sharp dyet, and hold all Cordials from us; should we not suffer him to take his own wise way? Should we pretend to more skill, than he hath? Will he first have our humors purged away, let us not crosse Him in this. Will he have us in the wilderness first, and keep us a long time there, before He speak to our hearts, as *Hos. 2: 14*. Why should he not have his will? (7.) Is the Lord waiting his own time, wherein to shew himself gracious; why would we have him to anticipate his own time? Is not every thing best in its owne proper Season? And knoweth not He the fittest Season, for His own appearing?

E

temporal outward life is here at all, or at least not principally, to be understood; for though it be true, that even the outward and bodily life, and its preservation in an evil time, be a great mercy *Ier. 45: last.* and *39: 18.* and much sought for and regarded by his people; and sometime also promised, as a special favour; as the places cited shew; yea and granted, as a great mercy and favour, as we finde it was done to *David* many a time, and to *Daniel*, and to the three Children, and others: though also all the Children of God may expect this, so far as the Lord shall see fit, for his own Glory, and for their real good and advantage: yet the life that is here principally, if not only, to be understood, is a life, that distresses, tribulations, persecutions, hardships, wants and wanderings, and all such Afflictions, as make that outward life, in a manner, no life, *vitam minime vitalem*, cannot wronge, or undo: a life, that death it self cannot rob a man of; so as he may say with *David Psal. 23: 4* *Yea though I walk thorow the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.* It is then a spiritual Life, that is here understood, whereof beleevers are in part, and may be more made partakers of, in a day of outward calamitie and distress.

To

To the end, we may explaine this in some measure, we shall speak a little to these three things.

1. We shall pointe at some things, to shew what a Life this is.

2. We shall mentione some of those evils, which this Life freeth the soul from.

3. We shall pointe forth some of those sweet effects, which this Life produceth in the soul, in a day of anguish and distress.

As to the first, What this Life is, that is and may be had in an evil time: That we may know something of this, we would consider the many several sorts of life, that are in this life. As

1. There is the life of *Justification*, where by the beleever liveth in the favour of God, as reconciled unto Him, through Jesus Christ, having his sinnes pardoned, and being accepted in the beloved: This is indeed a noble and excellent life, which these same words, *the just shall live by faith*, elsewhere speak to, and hold forth *Rom. 1: 17. Gal. 3: 11*. Now this life can and will be kept, notwithstanding of all that Devils and men can do; let them oppress, persecute, kill wound, imprisone, hunt, harasse, and do what they please, they shall never annul

many waſting ſtrokes. They committed fornication; and for that cauſe, there fell in one day three and twenty thouſand: They tempted Chriſt, and were deſtroyed of Serpents; they murmured, and were therefore deſtroyed of the deſtroyer: and all theſe things hapned unto them for enſamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come 1 Cor. 10: 8, 9, 10, 11.

Secondly, We would endeavour after a right frame of ſpirit, under ſuch a Diſpenſation, whereby in the whole frame of our ſoul, and in our whole deportment, we may comply with the Lords Deſignes, in that Diſpenſation: And ſo (1.) Conſider the voice and language of that Diſpenſation, hear what it ſaith *Micah. 6: v. 9.* and read what is written thereupon; for frequently it is found, that the roſe hath the ſin, that procured it, written on its back, either more darkly, or more diſtinctly and legibly: It were a ſutable work and ſtudy, in ſuch a day, to be ſearching-out iniquities, and enquireing after the Cauſes of the Lords Indignation and Wrath, with a purpoſe, after diſcovery made, to repent of them, and relinquish them, that the Lord might haſten his return. (2.) Minde the exerciſe of thoſe graces, which ſuch a diſpenſa-

penſation calleth for, and were formerly mentioned. (3.) We would alſo comply with the Lords Deſigne, in this Diſpenſation, as to the duties, formerly mentioned, and eſpecially called for at ſuch a time. (4.) When he is making diſcoveries hereby, whether of our own weakneſs, or of the weakneſs of others; or of the rage and cruelty of Adverſaries, let us not murmure, nor grieve; but adore and ſubmit; give him glory, and let us lay our hand upon our mouth. (5.) Is he purging and purifying the Sones of *Levi*? Is he caſting his Church in the fire, that ſhe may be purged from her droſſe; let us comply with that deſigne, and not finfully deſire to be out of the furnace, till our droſſe and tinne be removed. Should not we ſuffer him to purge his floor? *Mat. 3: 12.* and to purge the Sones of *Levi*, as Gold and Silver; even though he ſhould be like a refiners fire, and like fullers ſope, ſo that none may abide the day of his coming, or ſtand when he appeareth; ſeing all this is that they may offer unto the Lord, an offering in righteouſneſs; and their offerings may be pleaſant unto the Lord, as in the dayes of old, and as in former yeers. *Mal. 3: 2, 3, 4.* The Conſideration of that, which we have *Eſai. 4: 3, 4, 5.* ſhould quiet our ſpirits:

rits: And it shall come to passe, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the Daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the Spirit of judgment, and by the Spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoak by day, and the shineing of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory a defence. Should it not make our souls quiet, and cause us sweetly acquiesce, when we read *Esaï. 27: 9.* By this therefore sha'l the iniquitie of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin? Should not the consideration of this cause us say with the Church, *Micah. 7: v 9.* I will beare the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him? and sing upon the account of what we read *Ezek. 20: 37, 38.* And I will cause you to passe under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant; and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me, &c. (6.) If he be preparing us for a mercy, and putting us in case to improve and make a good use of a mercy and of a delivery, when it is given, why should we not comply with this? Why should

should we not comply with this? Why should we not be a co-worker with God in this? What would a delivery do to us, if we were not fit for it? We may get our desires granted, and He may send leanness withall into our souls *Psal. 106: 13*. And where will be our Advantage then? If we had a delivery, ere we were in good case for it; how long would it prove a delivery unto us? Is a Body full of gross humors fit to receive and get advantage by Cordials? Would not these contribute to the increasing of the sickness? If then the Lord, the only wise Physician for Souls, and for Churches, think it best to give us purging potions, and hold us under a sharp dyet, and hold all Cordials from us; should we not suffer him to take his own wise way? Should we pretend to more skill, than he hath? Will he first have our humors purged away, let us not crosse Him in this. Will he have us in the wilderness first, and keep us a long time there, before He speak to our hearts, as *Hos. 2: 14*. Why should he not have his will? (7.) Is the Lord waiting his own time, wherein to shew himself gracious; why would we have him to anticipate his own time? Is not every thing best in its owne proper Season? And knoweth not He the fittest Season, for His own appearing?

E

ing: Knoweth not He, when it is best for Him to shew forth his Grace, Mercy, Power, Justice, Glory and Faithfulness? He will hasten every thing in his time *Esai. 60: 22.* Let us then waite, while his good time cometh; and say, *even so come, Lord Jesus, Amen.*

CHAP. III.

What that Life is, that is had by faith, in a time of outward Trouble.

WE have seen in part, what that Lot is, which the people of the Lord have to look for, and expect in this world. The next thing, that we are to speak unto, is their Privilege, and Advantage, even in such a day. Though others may suppose that their lot and life is a very bitter and undesirable Condition; and their Enemies may intend no less, then their Ruine and Destruction; yet the Supreme God and Governour of the World, and their God, in Christ, hath ordered matters otherwayes; so that, even when their Condition, outwardly and in the eyes of the world, is as evil

evil as it can be, they are made partakers of a life; and may, if they will not sit in their own light, and foolishly prejudice themselves of the rich and excellent Advantages, they may have, enjoy a sweet and comfortable life.

The Condition of the people of God, at this time, to which the Text relateth, was, as we have seen, sad upon many accounts; yet we see, that there is a life to be had in that death; for even then the Just liveth by faith. Let the day be never so dark, and dismal; let the affliction and persecution be never so sad and sharpe; let their outward lot and condition be never so lamentable and deplorable; yet they may have a life of it; and there are sure grounds, whereupon they may promise to themselves and expect a life of it; so that they may say, with the Apostle 2 Cor. 4: 8, 9, 10, 11. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despaire; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed: alwayes bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body: For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest, in our mortal flesh.*

Asto this Life, I do not think, that a

temporal outward life is here at all, or at least not principally, to be understood; for though it be true, that even the outward and bodily life, and its preservation in an evil time, be a great mercy *Ier. 45: last.* and *39: 18.* and much sought for and regarded by his people; and sometime also promised, as a special favour; as the places cited shew; yea and granted, as a great mercy and favour, as we finde it was done to *David* many a time, and to *Daniel*, and to the three Children, and others: though also all the Children of God may expect this, so far as the Lord shall see fit, for his own Glory, and for their real good and advantage: yet the life that is here principally, if not only, to be understood, is a life, that distresses, tribulations, persecutions, hardships, wants and wanderings, and all such Afflictions, as make that outward life, in a manner, no life, *vitam minime vitalem*, cannot wronge, or undo: a life, that death it self cannot rob a man of; so as he may say with *David Psal. 23: 4* *Yea though I walk thorow the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.* It is then a spiritual life, that is here understood, whereof beleevers are in part, and may be more made partakers of, in a day of outward calamitie and distress.

To

To the end, we may explaine this in some measure, we shall speak a little to these three things.

1. We shall pointe at some things, to shew what a Life this is.

2. We shall mentione some of those evils, which this Life freeth the soul from.

3. We shall pointe forth some of those sweet effects, which this Life produceth in the soul, in a day of anguish and distress.

As to the first, What this Life is, that is and may be had in an evil time: That we may know something of this, we would consider the many several sorts of life, that are in this life. As

1. There is the life of *justification*, whereby the beleever liveth in the favour of God, as reconciled unto Him, through Jesus Christ, having his sinnes pardoned, and being accepted in the beloved: This is indeed a noble and excellent life, which these same words, *the just shall live by faith*, elsewhere speak to, and hold forth *Rom. 1: 17. Gal. 3:*

11. Now this life can and will be kept, notwithstanding of all that Devils and men can do: let them oppress, persecute, kill wound, imprisone, hunt, harasse, and do what they please, they shall never annul

the band and relation, that is, betwixt the Lord and them. They shall never make them less lovely, less gracious and acceptable, in the eyes of the Lord; Their state shall remaine fixed, as a rock, whereupon the waves may beat and break themselves too in vaine: They may hunt and banish them from their native soile, their natural relations, friends and acquaintances; but they can not, by all that they cando, Banish or chase them out of the favour of God, Notwithstanding of all that enemies can do, *in whose mouth is no faithfulness, whose inward part is very wickedness, whose throat is an open sepulchre, and who flatter with their tongue,* Psal. 5: 9. the righteous will be blessed, and with favour God will crown or compass them, as with a shield vers. 12. and in this favour of God is their life, Psal. 63: 3. Yea even when the Lord is by these outward sad Dispensations, brought about instrumentally by wicked and malicious enemies, shewing his fatherly anger & displeasure: yet this loving kindness remaineth Psal. 89: 31, 32, 33, 34. *If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visite their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, &c.* So

So that here is a Life, that the just may and shall live, in the worst of times, let Devils and Men do what they will.

2. There is a Life of *Sanctification*, whereby the Believer is renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, is made partaker of the Divine Nature, hath a seed and principle of grace within him; yea the Sanctifying Spirit of God dwelling in him, and working in him the works of God. Now this glorious and divine life a believer may, and shall live, in the midst of all outward perplexities and deaths. It is true, Satan may play his game, at such a time; and outward temptations, and inward corruptions may conspire together to hinder the free growth and exercise of this Life of Grace, and may for a time so far prevail, that there may appear no more fruit, blossomes or leaves, than are to be seen on a Vine tree in Winter; yet even, during that sharp and cold Winter Season, life will remaine in the root, and the tree will not be as fewel for the fire: so believers will have the root and seed remaining in them, and will not be like trees twice dead, plucked - up by the roots. As to this, the Ports of Hell shall not prevaile against them *Matth. 16: 18.* They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of

Christs hand : and Christs Father , who gave them to him , is greater then all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of his hand *Joh. 10: 28, 29.* Nay, so far is it from this, that, as such dayes of calamitie and trial give faire occasion for the special exercise of some graces, and are thereunto appointed : such as Faith in the Promises ; Repentance , because of provoking sins ; Self examination , or Searching of our wayes ; Hope , Patience ; and the like, so through the rich grace of God it is oft times found ; that the Children of God grow more , both down ward , in Self-abasing , Humility, &c. and upward in Love to God , and Zeal for his Interest , Love to the Brethren Mortification as to the pleasures , honours and riches of the world, Heavenly-mindedness and the like, in such evil dayes : so that their winter dayes (as to such outward exercises and dispensations) are their best dayes ; their best thriving dayes , and their most fruitful dayes : The very experiences, we have recorded of *David*, in the *Psalmes*, may be a sufficient confirmation of this : there was more of the exercise of the grace of God to be seen in all his way, while he was hunted and persecuted by *Saul*, and his wicked Court ; than when he was sitting on his throne in peace and quietness.

See

See what himself saith Psal. 119: 67. *Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word: and againe vers. 71. It is good that I have been afflicted, that I might learne t'y Statutes.* This we may see also verified in the Church of *Thessalonica*; when Paul writteth thus unto them, 2 *Tbes. 1: 3, 4. We are bound to thank God alwayes for you, Brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charitie of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth. So that we ourselves glory in you, in the Churches of God, for your patience and faith, in all your persecutions and tribulations, that ye endure.* So that we see, even in such evil dayes, the righteous can flourish like the Palm tree, and grow like a Cedar in Lebanon Psal. 92: 12.

3. There is a Life of Peace, both with God, and with themselves, that Beleevers do or may win at, even in the day, when they have no peace without from man; even when they can hear nothing from without but the sound of the trumpet, and the alarme of War; nothing but Edicts, Proclamations, Interdictions, Acts, Orders, Executions, Marchings; and what of that Nature, that may cause terrour in the Land of the living, they are allowed to sing a song of triumph within themselves; for

when they look up to heaven, they may see God the Father their fast Friend and Father; Christ Jesus the Lord, their Redeemer, Friend and Advocate; the Holy Ghost, their Comforter, Friend and Supporter. They may see, that having peace with God, they have peace with all the Royal Company of Holy Angels: and looking round about them, they may see, that they are at league with the very stones of the field *Job. 5: v. 23.* and that the Lord hath made a Covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground *Hos. 2: 18.* So likewises, when they look within themselves, they may finde much peace and quietness there; or if guilt stare them in the face, as ordinarily Satan will see what he can do, at such a time, to raise a storme in the Soul, they have the Peace-maker to go to with their sin and guilt; and when they have laid it over on him by faith, and gotten their Consciences sprinkled in his blood; then they may enjoy a great calme, in the midst of the most terrible storme of persecution and tribulation from Enemies. *He will keep him in perfect peace (or in peace, peace) whose minde is stayed on him, because he trusteth in him, Psal. 26: 3..* Such will have peace, peace, all

all sorts of peace, pure and perfect peace, sure and certaine peace, rational and real peace. The Lord of peace himself will give them peace alwayes, by all meanes, *2 Thes. 3: 16.* This peace is a part of the Kingdome of God, *Rom. 14: 17.* It is also a part of Christs Legacie: and who can take that from them? *Joh. 14: 27.* Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, (falsly, deceitfully, to your prejudice, and with a purpose to betray you, when occasion offereth) give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither be ye afraid: And againe *Joh. 16: 33.* Those things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world, ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. This is that peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which keepeth, as a garrison, the heart and minde, through Jesus Christ *Phil. 4: 7.* and what will a strong, well manned and well provided - garrison care for the loud noise of a few naked Souldiers? All the forces in the world cannot make a breach in, nor climbe over the wals of this Garrison: No flesh, with all their terrour, can once brangle the inward Peace of a Saint: They cannot cause a mutinie there: their granades cannot trouble them; nor harme, let be

blow up, the Magazine of their soul In the midst of all the confusions and noises about them, they may be quiet, still, well composed, settled and stayed, like mount Zion, that cannot be moved. Is not this a desirable life, in such an evil day? Was it not well with David, when he was in case to say Psal. 4: 8. *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety:* And as it is Psal. 3: 5, 6. *I laid me down and slept: I awaked, for the Lord sustained me; I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people, that have set themselves against me round about.* He had a great calme within, through faith laying hold on God, as his Shield, his Glory, and the Lifter up of his head vers. 3. and such a calme that all the noise of the body of the people with Absalom, pursuing after him, could not disturb his rest. This life delivereth the beleever from that fearful death of feare and fainting, that is ready to seize upon them, at such a time: for saith David Psal. 27: 1, 2, 3. *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, mine enemies, and my foes come upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encampe against me, my heart shall not fear, though war should rise against me, in this will*

will I be confident. This Life of Peace within causeth a fixedness of the heart, that it is not reeling, nor staggering, as unsettled; but the man is as a rock settled and secured on a firme unmovable basis: How could David else say, *Psal. 57: 7. My heart is fixed, O Lord, my heart is fixed*, when his Soul was among lions, and he did lye, even among them, that were set on fire, the sones of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharpe sword, as it is *vers. 4?* The good upright man, that feareth the Lord, shall not have cause to be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord: His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, *Psal 112. 7, 8.*

4. There is a life of *Accessio* and *Communion with God*, that all the outward trouble, that men can make, cannot mar, or take away; and which a beleever may enjoy, in the worst of times. Men may cast the man in prison, that neither Wife, nor any of his Relations shall have access to him, to be refreshing and comfortable unto him; but neither lock nor key, nor strong wals nor doors can keep out his God from him: Though he may be by men, so closed up from all flesh, that in that respect, his life may be made bitter unto him; yet he hath free access to the great God, and to his God

and Father, by the Spirit, through Jesus Christ *Ephes. 2: vers. 18. and 3: 12.* And O! who can express the good & excellency of this life? When they passe thorow the waters, he will be with them *Esaï. 43: 2.* No trouble outward can separate betwixt Christ and a beleeving soul: They may, in their distress, make their Requests known unto the Lord, by prayer and supplication; and hereby enjoy the Company of God; for in the day of trouble they are commanded to call upon him, and he hath promised to deliver, *Psal. 50: 15.* O! how sweet converse is this; when the soul, in the midst of its trouble, can send a post to heaven, and receive a dispatch; yea he beareth while they are but speaking, and as it were writting their post Letters *Esaï. 65. 24.* and he is at their hand *Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am Esaï. 58: 9.* and that though they were removed to the ends of the earth *Psal. 61. 2.* Afflictions may make some, who were formerly friends, turn unfriends, and stand aloof *Psal. 69: 8. and 88: 18.* and refuse to befriend a man, or speak a good word for him, in his distress. But the Lord will not despise, nor abhorre the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him, he heard him *Psal. 22. 24.* When Father and Mother forsake a man,

the

the Lord will take him up, Psal. 27: 10. Is not this a noble life, that a poor soul may converse with Him, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and that in the midst of flames? yea, when their heart is so overwhelmed, and their pressures so great, and their bondage so heavy, that they dar not pray, or if they might, can get no words to speak to God; even then, he will not *hide his care*, from *their breathing and their cry*, Lam. 3: 56. Yea the Spirit of God within them penneth their supplicating groanings, and *so helpeth their infirmity*, and *maketh intercession for them with groanings that cannot be uttered* Rom. 8: 26. No trouble or distresse outward, no malice or cruelty of Men, no shutting-up, can keep out the refreshing incomes of Peace from the God of Peace, or of Joy of the Holy Ghost. The God of all comfort comforteth, in all tribulations, 2 Cor. 1: 3, 4. Yea, as the sufferings of Christ abound, the Consolations of God can abound through Christ, *vers. 5*. And who can hinder God from speaking Peace to a Man's soul, from pouring - in the oile of joy, from conveying - into his Spirit a *reviving Cordial*? And seing such a life, as this is, can be had in Adversitie; may not such be said to live? What would a man seek more? What life comparable to this?

5. There

5. There is a life of Hope that the beleever may win to, in a time of sore troubles, and of sharpe trials. This was to be a part of the life of the Church, while she was in the Babilonish captivity, *Lam. 3: v. 21. This I recal to minde, therefore I have hope.* Now what was that, which was recalled to minde? Even that which followeth *Vers. 22, 23. It is of the Lords mercies, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness: And chiefly that which followeth Vers. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.* And David prescribed this, as his only life, when his soul was cast down, and disquieted within him, because of the insolencies, blasphemies, Apostacies, reproachings of the ungodly Nation, his enemies *Psal. 42: v. 5, 11. and 43: v. 5. saying, Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Yea such a life is this, that it cheereth the soul, and is accompanied with rejoycing, therefore we hear of a rejoycing in hope, *Rom. 5: 2. and 12: 12. Heb. 3: 6. for how deep so ever the sea of Affliction be, wherein they are tossed, their head is secured above the water; he cannot drown, let the winde blow, and sea rage, as it will.*

May

May not that man live, in the midst of all the troubles, he can meet with here, who hath the Helmet of Hope, even the hope of Salvation (as it is called *1 Thes. 5: 8.*) on his head? What can he fear, that seeth Salvation before him? Can death be terrible to him, who hath the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began *Tit. 1: 2.*? Have not they a noble life, even when in heaviness, through manifold temptations, whom the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten againe unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, from the dead *1 Pet. 1: vers. 3, 6*? How may such sing sorrow out of countenance? What will a generous spirit care for a blast in his face, when he is going to possesse a Crown?

6. There is a life of *Patience*, which beleevors may enjoy, in the midst of all the trials and tribulations, which they do meet with here: In patience they can possesse their soul *Luk. 21: 19.* and when the soul is possessed, life is possessed; as long as a man is Possessour of his soul, he is a living man, but when that is taken away, he dieth: Now patience is the way to keep the soul at home, which impatience, fretting,

fretting, repining, and wearying thrusts, as it were out of doores: Now the beleever may win to this life of patience, by the God of patience, Rom. 15: 5. who directs into the patience of Christ, as it is in the original 2 Thes. 3: 5. and strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness Coloss. 1: 11. Yea, the very tribulation it self contributeth, through the blessing of God, unto this patience; for tribulation is said to work patience Rom. 5: 3. and the trying of faith worketh patience Lam. 1: 3. And by this patience the soul is made to waite upon the Lord, and to waite for the accomplishment of the promise Rom. 8: 25; and they shall not be ashamed that waite for him Esai. 49: 23. The Lord is good to such, as waite for him Lam. 3: 25. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly waite for the Salvation of the Lord vers. 26.

7. There is a life of Courage, Strength, Resolution, Steadfastness and Throwbearing to be had, in a day of trial and temptation. In the day when I cried (said David Psal. 138: v. 3.) thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me, with strength in my soul. So Psal. 27: 14. It is the Lords advice, waite on the Lord, be of good courage; and this promise is added, and he shall strengthen thine heart. So Psal. 31: 24. When notwithstanding of all that

that Satan, with his Instruments, can do, they are helped to *stand fast in the Lord, in one Spirit, with one minde, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.* Phil. 1, 27. that is a life accompanied with great Advantages. When a Souldier keepeth his ground, and doth not yeeld a foot, for all the onsets and Opposition he meeteth with; what hath he to complaine of? Hath he not much to boast of? Is not his valour and courage, his stedfastness and resolution, his glory; notwithstanding of all his sore work? So when Beleevers are helped to stand fast in the faith, to quite themselves like men, and to become strong, as it is 1 Cor. 16: 13. so that enemies, for all their force, cruelty and rage, can gaine nothing, is not this a noble Life? What would they have more, than to be conquerours? And are they not conquerours, when they overcome all the Machinations, Devices, cruel Projects, bloody Consultations, and unmerciful Executions of Adversaries? And do they not overcome. when the Enemies are disappointed of their ends; and they hold fast the Truth? It is true, they may be killed, sawne asunder, stoned and tortured; but yet for all that, be more than conquerours, through him that loved them.

8. There is a Life of joy, that may be had, notwithstanding of all outward pressures. Therefore saith James Chap. 1: v. 2. — count it all joy, when ye fall into diverse temptations. And Peter saith 1 Pet. 4: 12, 13. Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fierie trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing hapned unto you. But reioice in as much as ye are partakers of Christs sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glade also with exceeding joy. The jewes here took joyfully the spoiling of their goods Heb. 10: 34. And the Lord can strengthen, with all might, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness Col. 1: 11. The scattered strangers, unto whom Peter wrote 1 Pet. 1: v. 6. were made partaker of this life, when he saith of them, Wherein ye greatly reioice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. The Apostles also experienced this life, when they departed from the presence of the Councel, reioicing that they were counted worthe to suffer shame, for his name Act. 5: 41. Beleevers then may enjoy a life, yea and such a life as is more then a life, even a life of joy and gladness, which is the suburbs of glory, where joy shall be full, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away Esai. 35: 10. and 51: v. 11. Beleevers know, how far preferable

ble this is unto the painted joy of the wicked, when they have their best life in the world *Psal. 4: 7. For as the crackling of thornes under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool, Eccl. 7: vers. 6.*

Secondly, Having thus shoven, what a manifold and multifarious life beleevers by faith may win to, in the midst of all their outward trouble and trials: we come, for further explication of the same, to speak a word to the *second* thing proposed, to wit, To shew some of those evils, which this Life freeth the soul from, in such a time.

1. The beleever by this life is kepted from heartless despondencie and fainting, which otherwayes he is obnoxious unto, and which proveth oftentimes very noxious and hurtful, as it is an evidence of much weakeness and want of strength; for (as the Wise man saith *Proverb. 24: 10.*) *if thou faint in the day of Adversity, thy strength is small*; an evil it is that many worthy ones have been taken with, in a day of Adversity, as *Baruch Jer. 45: 3. Jeremiah himself Jer. 8: 18. Jonah Chap. 2: 7. and 4: 8. & the Church Lam 1: 12. and 5: 17. and an evil that is to be feared and guarded against Heb. 12: 3. Ephes. 3: 13. 2 Thes. 3: 13.* An evil also that hath dangerous consequences. Now where

where this life is, the soul is guarded from this evil; & is so steeled and fortified within, that it is not in great hazard of swooning. When the soul liveth by faith, its head is holden up, the heart is strengthened with cordials; there is access to lay its head, in the bosome of Christ, and to suck Consolation from him; heaven is secured, and the everlasting crown ensured, whereby it is manifest, that there can be loss, but gain; and that consideration cannot but support and strengthen, notwithstanding of many petty losses.

2. By this life, the beleever is kepted from an hopeless despondency, as if there were no more hope: as if the matter were wholly desperate; and all reliefe were not only out of sight, but also out of the reach of hope. What a dishonourable frame of Spirit this is unto God, cannot be hid; seing it is a questioning, if not an expresse denying both of Gods power, and of his Good will Love and Faithfulness. It is a saying, with the house of Israel Ezek. 37: 11. ---- *Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parte.* Now, where this life is, there is a life of hope (as we shewed) and this helmet of hope keepeth the head safe; and beside, it giveth good ground to expect supplies of strength Psal. 31: 24.

dis-

disappointment to enemies Psal. 38: 15, 16.
constant protection Ps. 33: 18. mercy v. 22.
pardon, and what ever their case calleth for
Psal. 39: 7, 8.

3. Hereby the beleever is freed from that
evil of inward sorrow, griefe & vexation of
Spirit. Trouble long continued will bring
on this distemper, even in the best, as we
see in David Psal. 31: 9, 10. *Have mercy upon
me, O Lord, for I am in trouble, mine eye is
consumed with griefe, my soul, and my belly: for
my life is spent with grief, and my years with
fighing; my strength faileth me, because of mine
iniquity, and my bones are consumed* But after-
ward, as this life began to revive and act,
we hear some what else out of his mouth,
vers. 14. *But I trust in thee, o Lord, I said;
thou art my God.* Vers. 15. *My times are in thy
hand. deliver me from the hand of mine ene-
mies, and from them that persecute me.* 19. *O
how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid
up for them that fear thee; which thou hast
wrought for them, that trust in thee, &c.*
20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy pre-
sence, from the pride of man.* ——— 21. *Blessed
be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his marvel-
lous kindness in a strong city.* 22. *For I said in
my hast, I am cut off from before thine eyes;
nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my sup-
plications, when I cryed unto thee.* His con-
cluding

cluding exhortation is also remarkable v. 23, 24. *O Love the Lord, all ye his Saints; for the Lord preserveth the faithful and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.* Now the great difference betwixt these two frames is very obvious; and withall it is manifest, how great the advantage is, which is had by this freedom from sorrow of heart and griefe of minde, which oft maketh the afflicted mans case much worse, than it would have been by all the outward distress.

4. This life delivereth the beleever from all soul-disquieting and distracting thoughts and cares about the event. It is well known, what perplexitie those thoughts cause in the soul; and how they discompose the spirit of a man, and put him out of case for a right deportment under the trial; and oft prompteth him to think of unlawful meanes of an outgate: what a mercy is it then, for one, in outward trouble and perplexitie, to be freed from the distracting cogitations, that jumble, confuse and perplexe the soul? Now this life, that may be had by faith, freeth the beleever from this evil; for it Prompteth the soul to cast that burden over on the Lord, and to leave it there, and not

to be anxious about the matter ; but only to be careful to do its duty : *David* prescribeth this remedie against this evil , unto his own soul, as we heard above from *Psal.* 42, and 43. and that thrice over , saying, *Why are thou disquieted within me ? Hope in God &c.*

5. Hereby the soul of a beleever is freed from that fear of man, which readily causeth a snare *Prov.* 29: 25. and putteth the soul out of all Christian composure : quite unhingeth it , that it is fit for no duty : But this frame of life dispelleth those dark clouds, that occasion this fear , as we see in *David* 1 *Sam.* 30: 6. He was greatly distressed , for his own Souldiers spake of stoning him : But what doth he ? *He encouraged himself in the Lord , his God* and this put away all distress and feare. Where this life is acting , the man may say with *David* *Psal.* 27: 1, 2, 3. *The Lord is my light and my Salvation : whom shall I feare ? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid* — *Though an host should encampe against me , my heart shall not feare &c.*

6. This life will also free the beleever from that plague of stupiditie , lukewarmness, carnal securitie, and senselesness under these sad allarming Dispensations ; for this life is an active thing , and maketh the Soul
F quick,

quick, agile and lively for God; and his Interest: and is an enemy unto deadness and laziness in acting.

7. So this life delivereth the soul of the beleever from that bitter humore of quarrelling with the Almighty, fretting and repining against his Dispensations; an evil that is too too rife, and that puts the soul utterly out of its station, and sets it upon plaine rebellion against the Lord, and upon a calling of the most High and Supream Lord unto his bar; in stead of that dutiful acknowledging of him for the only Supream, and Absolute Disposer of all; and stooping before Him, and saying, his holy will be done. When the *Psalmist Psal. 73.* was carried away with this fit of passion, he had several unsavourie expressions: but when this life began to stirre, he presently saw his mistake, and looked upon himself rather as a beast, than as a Saint, in what he had been and said *vers. 22.* So *Psal. 77.* the *Psalmist* had some such fit, and undue expressions; but at length recovering himself, he saw he was wrong, and that he was raving *vers. 10.* and afterward hath more savourie, and sutable expressions of the Lord. This life discovereth the Lord to be righteous, and their guilt procuring the stroke; and thereupon they are made to say
with

with the Church Micah. 7: 9. *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause &c.* The life of patience causeth them lye down, and say, *here I am to lye, as long as thou wilt.*

Thirdly, As to the third particular, viz. The Effects produced in the soul by this life, in such an evil time: though by what is already said, many of these may be obvious, and others may easily be collected; yet I shall mention a few, which may give occasion to think of others; such as these.

1. Hereby the Soul will be kepted within sight of God, and see its duty, in that day: and this indeed is no small advantage; for the maine cause or occasion of persons miscarrying in such a day of exercise and affliction, is their neither discovering of God, nor understanding what is duty; and the last of these doth necessarily attend the other; for when the Lord is set before us alwayes, he giveth counsel, and our reins can instruct us in the night season Psal. 16: 7, 8. for in his light we see light, Psal. 36: v. 9. How great then must be the advantage of this life, when the beleever thereby is kepted nigh God, who is his Rock, his Strength, his Light and Leader? What

can darken his way, who standeth in the light of the Lord, and in his Counsel? And what can overmaster him, who is so nigh unto the Strength of Israel? What can affright him from dutie, who hath the holy and great God in his view? What can the fear of those, that cause terrour in the land of the living, do to one, who seeth him, who is Invisible: *Moses by faith forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King; for he endured, as seeing him who is Invisible Heb 11: vers. 27.* The answere that such will have to give unto all temptations, will be ready. How shall I do this thing, and sin against God?

2. Hereby beleivers will be kept in a calme, equable, and composed frame, under the various changes of dispensations, and temptations; when Satan is changing weapons upon them; and sometimes assaulting them with frowns, and sometimes with favours; using various and contrary meanes and methods to break them, they are found on their feet standing on their guard, and in their right posture; for this life keepeth them upright, and in a watchful frame: blow the winde out of what airth it will, out of the North, or out of the South, they are on their guard, knowing that Satan is restless, and that their Adversarie, the Devil, as a roaring

ing lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devoure 1 Pet. 5: 8. They are fixed, and not soon moved, or commoved at what occurreth, nor readily tossed, hither and yond, with every winde that bloweth; they can neither be flattered into a forsaking of the way of the Lord, nor frightened from their duty.

3. This Life is an enemie to negligence and carelesnes, for it setteth the soul about dutie, with all diligence and care; it airteth the soul Godward in prayer, humble waiting and dependance: according as the case and the necessity calleth, so this Life sends the soul away to God, to seek helpe. Is it an houre of darkness? Then God must be a light unto him. Is the dutie heavie and difficult? Then everlasting armes must be had under. Is the heart like to faint? Strength, must be sought from the God of all strength and of all comfort. Are temptations to turning aside strong and multiplied? The al sufficient supporter must be plyed so much the more; and the whole weight and burden of the soul must be laid upon him. Is the temptation and difficultie lasting and growing? He that hath helped in six troubles, must be sought unto in the seventh: What time they are afraid, they will trust in him

Psal. 56: v. 3. as for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me: Evening and morning and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice Psal. 55: vers. 16, 17.

4. This life turneth the soules face Godward, how dark and dismal soever the condition be, wherein the beleever is. When *Jonah* was in the belly of the fish, the waters compassed him about, even to his soul, the deeps closed him round about, the weeds were wrapt about his head, he went down to the bottome of the mountains, the earth with her bars was about him; even when he was in such a sad and hopeless Condition, this Life caused him to look towards Gods holy Temple: Even when his soul fainted within, he remembred the Lord, and his prayer came in unto him, into his holy Temple *Jonah 2: 1 — 7.* When *David* might possiblie be driven to the ends of the earth, & his heart be overwhelmed withall; yet he resolved to cry to God, that he might be led to the rock, that is higher than he *Psal. 61: 2.* and when his Spirit was overwhelmed within him, then God knew his path *Psal. 142: vers. 3.* to wit, that it was Godward as the *vers. 5.* of that Psalm sheweth.

3. This Life keepeth the soul in a watching

ing frame , looking about on all hands , fearing the Adversarie from all quarters : for the beleever knoweth , that a time of outward trouble is a fit season for Satan , who useth much to fish in troubled waters , to worke in ; and it is usually found , that that is one of his market - dayes , wherein he plyeth his time with diligence and assiduity : So that if the beleever be asleep , or careless , or off his watch toure , he becometh a fit prey for this Adversary : it must therefore be a very great advantage , to be kept in a circumspect watching posture : And this Life affordeth this advantage . The fear of God maketh them alwayes to feare , lest they offend , and to feare the Adversarie , and their own treacherous heart .

¶ 6. This Life putteth the soul in a humble waiting postour , far from a sinfull hastning out of the trouble , by hearkning to sinful proposals ; He that beleeveth will not make haste , but will waite patiently . This was *David's* posture *Psal.* 123 : 2 . and 130 : 5 , 6 . and upon this he pleaderh with God *Pf.* 52 : 9 . and 25 : 21 . So was it with the Church *Micah.* 7 : 7 . and with *Esaias Chap.* 8 : 17 . for by this they are taught to know , that the Lord is Absolute , and wise ; and therefore , as He cometh when he will . so he cometh in the fittest Season ; and that waiters have

the promise of throwbearing *Eesai. 40: 31.* and of delivery at length *Eesai. 49: vers. 23,* *Psal. 37: 9* and are blessed *Eesai. 30: 18.* and what more can be desired?

In reference to our improvement of this comfortable and heart - strengthening truth, we would take notice of these particulars.

First, That this life admitteth of various and different degrees, and is not alike in all: some have it in a greater measure, some in a lesser measure: For

1. The Lord may bestow it upon some, in a very large measure, and in an high degree; so that they can, (as it were) give a defiance to all possible and contingent trouble, to do so much as marre their very Musick. *Habbakuk* had no little share hercof, when he crieth out *Chap. 3: 17, 18.* *Although the fig - tree shall not blossome; neither fruit be in the Vines; the labour of the Olive shall fail; and the fields shall yeeld no meat; the flocks shall be cutt off from the fold; and there shall be no herd in the stals. Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* Some may thus be lifted up above all supposable difficulties, straits, dangers, necessities and temptations, that can intervene; and sing a triumph, as being more then Conquerours.

2. Others

2. Others may be so far quickned by this Life, that, in a present sad emergent, and in a sad push of inevitable hazard, they may be sustained, and made to stand; as no way forsaken or made hopeless: Thus was it with *David*, when his own souldiers were like to mutinie, yea and spoke of stoning of him, 1 *Sam.* 30: v. 6. for then, *he encouraged himself in the Lord.*

3. In some it may act so, as, though the soul be not kepted from inward trouble and disquietment, because of the outward affliction and trials; yet it may discover the evil and the unsutableness of this disquieted frame; and convince the soul, that it ought to be otherwayes: Yea and put the Beleever to a chiding of himself, and to a pleading against his own soul: As we see in *David*, *Psal.* 42, and 43. when discovering what grounds of hope and of confidence in God he had, for all that was past or present, he smartly taxeth his own soul, saying, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?* Whereby he declared, that it was a most groundless and unreasonable thing, for his soul to be thus cast down and disquieted.

4. In others it may work to a discerning of their unfurable behaviour, when they were standing against the push of the

temptation, though at the time they neither had so much strength, as courageously to resist; nor so much deliberat and clear light, as to discover their mistake with convinceing power: As the Psalmist Ps. 73. got a humbling sight afterward of his brutish ignorance, and gross mistake, which he saw not, when he was wrestling with the temptation. See vers. 3, 13, 15, and 22. compared together. So Asaph, being hurried and carried off his feet Psal. 77: 7, 8, 9. was not in case to consider things aright, and therefore discovered his own weakness; but presently recovering himself, he seeth and confesseth his infirmity, vers. 10.

5. In some, when they can get no light of comfort; no sensible incomes of Joy of the Holy Ghost, no sensible supports of Comfort; nay possibly no satisfying and heart-quieting grounds of hope; yet this life may work so, as to keep them from sinking in despondency, and from crying out, our hope is perished, our hope is gone, and we are cut off for our part; and may airth them unto a staying upon the Lord, and ruminating on his word: As Esai. 50: 10. *Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him*

him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

6. In some, this Life may have no other sensible and apparent effects, for a time, but a keeping of the soul from desperat despondency, and giving over of the matter, as utterly hopeless and desperat: though they can give no positive grounds of hope and confidence, either of throw-bearing, or of an outgate; yet they dar not positively and plainly assert the contrary; but they will waite, upon *a maybe*; and a maybe or halfe a promise, or halfe an hope will so far support them, as that they will not peremptorily say, *my hope is perished from the Lord.* Jonathan was upon a very improbable like attempt; and yet this kepted up his Spirit, *It may be, that the Lord will worke for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many, or by few, 1 Sam. 14: 6.* The Submissive soul will put his *mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope, Lam. 3: v. 29.*

7. In some this life may have this effect, that though the temptation be great; upon the one hand, the hazard great, if they stand fast; and upon the other hand, the advantages of compliance with wicked courses seemingly great; yet though they know little, what it is to be steeled with in-

ward influences of Consolation, or of confirmation, for the establishing of their heart, in the day of trial; Yet they dar not depart from known and received truthes; nor embrace the way of the wicked, and joine with them in their sinful courses. The three Children, how great soever the temptation was, and howbeit they had no inward perswasion (as would appear by that supposition made *Dan. 3: v. 18. but if not,*) of the Lords wonderful delivering them out of the hand of *Nebuchadnezzar*: Yet they peremptorily refused to sin. saying, *Be it known unto thee, o King, that we will not serve thy Gods; nor Worshipe thy golden image, which thou hast set up.*

8. Some, though the torrent of temptation may suddenly surprize them, and carry them off their feet, yet this life will not be quite extinct, it will revive againe, after the swoon is over; and they will recover their former health, and possibly with an addition of more strength, courage, activitie and resolution; as we see in *Peter*, who, being suddainly surprized, fell into a very dangerous and dead-like swoon, when he denied his Master, and that with such sad and aggravating circumstances, yet he recovered life, at length, after he went out and weeped, and thereafter became

became the more forward , couagious and resolute.

9. Some , though they have not such a measure of this life , as will make them count it all Joy , when they fall into diverse temptations , and triumphantly to rejoice in their sufferings ; yet they will have that measure , as will cause them tremble for the Ark , and will make them creep in holes , to pray for Zion ; and fearing their own weakness , to pray that God would not lead them into temptation ; and how ever matters go with themselves , they will not take part with the workers of iniquity , but will joine rather in heart and affection with the people of God.

10. Though some cannot much dispute , plead , or contend in the streets , for oppressed Truth ; yet this life will prompt them to venture all they have , before they deny Christ , or forsake his Truth and Interest.

Secondly , This Life will not be alwayes alike active , agile , sprightful , quick and strong : As it hath its various measures and degrees in different persons ; so it hath its healthful times and sickly times , in one and the same person : and the reason is , It is fed & nourished by the continual influences of Life , from the fountaine of Life , the

Lord of Life; so that when these comē in greater abundance, this life is in a more athleticque temper, and they are more robust, and more able to endure and fight; and againe when these are restrained or obstructed, Life, Strength and Vigour decay; and the strong man becometh weak, as a Childe: This the frequent experience of the Saints doth manifest. *David* at one time able to leap over walls, and run thorow troops, and go thorow all opposition; at another time is fainting, and saying, I shall one day fall by the hand of *Saul*, and calling all men liars, *1 Sam.* 27: 1. *Psal.* 116: 11. How remarkable are these ups and downs, wonderful activitie and againe fainting, in the case of *Job*; as his book witnesseth. *Jeremie* is another clear instance, who *Chap.* 20: 7, 8, 9, 10. is speaking as one raving in the height of a fever, without the health of an ordinary Christian, murmuring against the Lord, and quarreling with him, because of the bitterness of the life, he had in the service of the Lord: Immediately he returneth to himself, and wins to the lively exercise of faith, and is calling upon all to fall a praising, upon his account *vers.* 11, 12, 13. and yet in the following verses to the end of the Chapter, there is a fearful relapse into the former distemper of

of raving; for he speaketh rather like one distracted, than like a Saint, cursing the time of his birth; and the man, who first brought tidings to his Father of his Nativitie, because he would not bring the wrath of God upon himself, by murdering him, when new come forth of the womb.

These two considerations should make all sober, in their judging of themselves, or of others; seeing in times of trial and tribulation, all, that have the root of the matter in them, will not be alike able to ride out the storme. Every sea-man is not alike stout, in a storme; nor is every souldier alike couragious and valiant, in the day of battel. Nay, nor is the same man alwayes the same man in all cases. He may be like a lion to day, who to morrow may faint; the shaking of a leaf may at one time make that man tremble, who at another time had courage to runthorow pickes and drawn swords. Sufferings, and a right deportment in time of suffering, is the free gift of God; & He is free to give his gifts, as he will, and to whom he will *Phil. 1:29.* Courage, Valour, Constancy, and Strength are the free gifts of God; and He distributeth these to whom, and at what season he will: And who can say unto him, what dost

dost thou? We should not therefore conclude, that such or such have nothing of this life, because we see not alwayes these manifest evidences and effects of it, in a time of trial, which would prove not only life, but life in its vigour and full strength: The failings and faintings of good Christians, & of such, who sometimes were bold as lions, as not knowing what it was to feare the face of man, should make all, who stand, take heed lest they fall; and see where the stock of life, strength and courage lyeth; and that it is not in themselves, but in the Lord; and that if He do not send influences to revive, and corroborat, even a *Sampson* will become weak, as another man: and that therefore all flesh should feare, and live by faith and dependance upon the Lord, in a time of trial, and not to rest upon former experiences of strength and throw-bearing; as if that could not fail; seing the dayes trial, must have the dayes influences, fitting for it; and what was given for yesterdayes exercise, will no suffice for the dayes work

Againe, the Consideration of this, that there is a life for the people of God, in a time of sad and sharpe troubles, should upon the one hand cause enemies and persecuters trouble, and molest his people at
leasure

leasure; seeing they will not, by all their crueltie and rage, be able to gaine their point: When they are hunting, harassing, killing and murthering the Saints of God, they think they are undoing them; and yet when they are doing their worst, the Saints are living: death it self cannot take away this life. Nothing can separate them from the Love of Christ; neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword. Nay, in all these things, they are more then Conquerours, through him that loved them. And they may be perswaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things Present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate them from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord *Rom. 8: 35, 37, 38, 39*. And upon the other hand, it should make the people of God shake off all base fear: Why should they be afraid of trouble, when there is a Life, and that a noble and excellent Life, to be had in trouble? When their Life shall be preserved, may they not be stout? When their stock of Life is ensured, what should make them fear? Persons, that are hardened by unlawful means, and are proof against shot or sword,

sword, can take courage to themselves in the midst of danger : And may not they, who have God's proof, be much more courageous ?

Yet it must be confessed, That too often, the Lords own people look not like such a life, in a day of trial ; but rather as Persons, without health, heart or strength ; which many wayes appeareth.

1. By shunning to give a faithful, full and seasonable Testimony, for the Lord and his oppressed Truth, because of apparent hazard, we may come into by that meannes ; which upon the matter is a plaine denying of him, before men : Now sure, where this Life is, in any measure of activity, such a relinquishment of known duty would not be. There was little of this Life apparent in the Disciples, when they left their Master alone, and fled away, and would not stand by him, and witness a good Confession for him ; nor in those Christians, who forsook *Paul* 2 *Tim.* 4: 16.

2. By taking such wayes and courses, to warde off a blow, and to save the skin, as are but the result of consultations had with flesh and blood, and as savoure of the flesh ; and such as themselves, at other times, would judge such, and could not but acknowledge to be such. *Peter* neither before,

before, nor after, could have approved his denying of the Lord Jesus; howbeit in the meane time he judged it a prudential way to save himself from manifest hazard.

3. By too ready listning to offers or overtures, that promise freedom from the feared trouble, and carry not in their front a manifest betraying of the Cause, or renunceing of Christs Truth. in whole, or in part; when yet the Zeal of the Lord, and this Life in activity, would easily discover a closse connexion, betwixt hearkning to such overtures, and a quitting of the Cause. The primitive Christians saw a connexion, betwixt the delivering of a piece of torne paper, or of any book, to save themselves from the fire, and the open renunceing of Christianity; for they had this Life in its Strength; and according to the measure of this life, there is a proportionable measure of sharpe-sightedness, and holy sagacitie, discovering secrets, that such, as want it, or that measure of it, cannot see, nor understand.

4. By more consulting and deliberating how we may keep up a name and a reputation of making no defection, and withall how we may keep ourselves out of the reach of trouble; than how we shall be
most

most valiant for the Truth, and appeare most in its defence, and for the setting forward of the same. If *Peters* thoughts had been more busied about the propagation of the Gospel Truth, he had not fallen upon that dissimulating course, for which he was rebuked of *Paul Gal. 2.* It is no evidence of true valour, to act no more against the enemy, than may keep from being questioned by a Council of war.

5. By more earnest & assiduous thoughts of mind, and serious study, how to put a face and colour upon any course, that promiseth something of immunitie from trouble; and how to finde our grounds, where-upon to warrand and plead for such a practice, and probable reasons, that may seem to plead for it *hic & nunc*: than how to advance and set forward the Truth of God, according to our place and power; Though it be a manifest and undeniable duty: or than how to glorifie God, and confirme his Truth by our taking shame to ourselves, in acknowledging our weakness. We see this in good *Aaron*, when he was seeking to palliat and extenuat his sin of making the Golden Calfe, *Exod. 32: v 22, 23, 24.*

6. By a fainting and falling from former Zeal,

Zeal, Courage, Boldness and Plainness in witnessing for the Lord and his Truth, and in vindicating the same; and that because of the continuance of the trial, and the lesser and lesser appearance that there is of the Lords sending outward prosperitie to Zion. When iniquitie aboundeth, through the long prosperity of the wicked, the love of many waxeth cold, and a decay in love and zeal argueth a decay in this life.

7. By too apparent, and too much influencing dejectedness of mind, discouragement of Spirit and heartlesness; as if, in a manner, all were gone, and all hope cut off; which jumbleth and perplexeth the soul, darkeneth the mind, and unhingeth for dutie, when seen and discovered. Hereby it is that wise men have their wits a seeking, in a day of darkness and difficulties; and that men of might cannot finde their hands: whileas, where this Life is in its vigour, as dutie is clear, so resolution to follow it is strong, and inexpugnable, and the feeble become as *David*.

8. By unnecessary, yea and hurtful dwelling upon the thoughts of trouble before us; and forecasting in our mind, supposing and imagineing wonderful difficulties; and hereby creating feares, and distempering

pering apprehensions ; which have no other tendency , but to faine us in the way , and discourage us from going about dutie , because of Lions supposed in the way : Whereas this Life , in due strength and vigour , would divert the minde from such thoughts and apprehensions : and cause the thoughts run into another channel , and present other animating , strengthening and encouraging considerations , and such as would bear down the cry of all such supposed bugbares , and drye up a very flood of these zeal - cooling and soul-weakning apprehensions. When *Paul* had the call of God to preach his Son among the heathen , immediatly , (without any deliberation , or demurre ,) he conferred not with flesh and blood , *Gal. I: v. 15: 16.*

9. By following more the *practice* , and hearkening more to , and resting more upon the *Counsels* of some men of Name and Reputation for piety and wit ; than the *Practices* of the registrated examples in Scripture , set forth to incite us unto an imitation , and the counsels of the Spirit of the Lord , proposed for our Rule: There is, no doubt, such an evil symptome of *decay* of this life ; and its effects are dangerous ; the ground no wayes being sure , upon the account ,
that

that Men, even the best of Men, are but fallible, and see but in part; and God hereby being provoked, in righteousness and holy Justice, to darken the eyes of our guide, may teach us, by sad experience, to finde our folly, in forsaking the only sure guide. We see in the forecited place *Gal. 1* and *2*, how tender and careful *Paul* was, in this matter, lest it should have been thought, that he had done nothing but by the Advice of, and as depending upon, or as commissioned by the other Apostles; and so, had no immediat warrand for what he did, as he said he had; he would not at first go neer to *Jerusalem*, where the Apostles were; and when after three yeers he had occasion to be there, he saw none of them but *Peter* and *James*. And againe fourteen yeers thereafter, he went againe to *Jerusalem*, but not upon their call, but by revelation, as he saith *Gal. 2: 2*. and he communicated to some of the chiefe of them the Gospel, which he preached, as not being ashamed thereof; not that he might have their approbation, and so their warrand; for *vers. 6*. he saith, those that seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to him, only they gave to him, and *Barnabas*, the right hand of fellowship, and looked upon them as faithful brethren.

brethren. And when he communicated the matter unto them, it was but privately, lest by any meanes he should have run, and had run in vaine: He would do nothing, no not in a circumstance, that might say, he did depend upon them, and walked not upon the warrand of his Commission he received from his Master, but would in time coming walk by their example and directions, more than by the command of Christ; and thus give ground to question all that he had done formerly, as an Apostle.

10. By a too great readines to accept of small favours with thankfulness, when it is attended with outward ease and quiet, though it be in matters, that are none of ours, but the proper Interest of our Lord and Master; in avowing of which, with constancy, we are exposed to continual difficulties and dangers: This, sure, argueth a decay of Zeal for Christ, and his Interests, when we are called to buy the truth at any rate, but at no rate to sell it, and what is given away by Compact is not so recoverable by Law as what is robbed or taken from us without our consent; and it is undeniable, that we may not so much as give a tacite consent unto the detaining of any thing, that is our Lords, *Moses* knew

knew this, when he would not consent to leave one hoof behinde him, though thereby he might have delivered six hundred thousand persons and more, out of manifest slavery, both as to soul, and body, out of which they were groaning to be delivered, and expecting a delivery with many a disappointment. Some might possibly have thought, that *Moses* might more have respected the Liberty of his Countrey-men, than to have stood upon such a *punctilio*: But he was of another spirit, and would not yeeld even so far, whatever should follow.

II. By an unwillingness to understand what is the duty of the day, because of seen, or apparent dangers to follow the conscientious practice thereof; shuning meanes of information, or of conviction. This, sure, is an evident demonstration of a decay in this Life of God, when persons are willingly ignorant (as *Peter* speaketh of some, in reference to a point of faith) of what they should know, and of what they should by all meanes studie to know, that they may approve themselves faithful, in the day of trial. And this may come to that height, that they dar not seek light in that matter from God, lest it occasione a torment within. Is

not this in effect, to say (with those mentioned *Job. 21: vers. 14.*) *unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes?* And could it be thus with such, in whom this Life were in any measure lively, if they were not under a great decay, or in a swoon?

12. By being affrighted, sadned, discontented, and inwardly grieved at any course begun, or taken, or carried on, that apparently will occasion or bring on trouble and persecution; though it be manifest and undeniable, that the course fallen upon be a necessary and suitable duty of the day; and that faithfulness to Christ and his Truth calleth for it, at the hands of all, who would appeare before Him, in peace. Were this Life not under a decay, the zeal of the Lords House would so eate them up, that every motion made, and every course set on foot, how hazardous so ever, would be the rejoicing of their heart; and they would hide their eyes from all danger, that might follow thereupon.

13. By refusing to follow necessarie duties, in such a day, because there are few, that will concurre with them therein, or approve them in it; or because some eminent men judge it not prudent, or saife; and by being inwardly glade that such a motion

motion was discountenanced, and such a course was judged by others not fit, meerly because they saw, that thereby they would be freed from trouble, that otherwise could not be evited; whileas, if this Life were in vigour, such a disappointment would be as a sword in their bones; and they, though left alone, would follow the cleare dutie, whatever risque they might run, upon the account thereof: faithful *Arbanasius* feared not to stand alone, though all the great men, wise men, & learned men were against him, and condemning him.

Other things of this nature might be mentioned, beside such Courses, as carry in their forehead a manifest and undeniable compliance with the courses and designs of Enemies, and a palpable shifting of the Cross of Christ: But these may serve for an hint; and may give ground for searching after, and finding out others, to our Conviction and Humiliation.

As for the sinful Causes and Meanes of this evil distemper (if any enquire after them) They are so obvious and notoure, that much needeth not be spoken thereupon. We may reduce them to these few heads.

I. A decay of Zeal for and Love to the Lord, and his precious Interests: When

Persons fall from their first Love, the Love of their espousals, all other duties, that must be principled, and enlivened with this Love, decay accordingly; especially such duties as are more difficult, and are attended with hazard, and therefore would call for a more then ordinary measure of zeal, to carry them forward. The want of this made the Church of *Laodicea*, cold-rife and lukwarne, in all her performances: and therefore it is prescribed as a remedie, *be zealous therefore and Repent Revel. 3: v. 19.* If *Phineas* had not been zealous for his God, *Numb. 25: v. 11, 13.* he had never attempted that hazardous and difficult interprise his alone:

2. A decay of the necessary dutie of mortification, and of dying, as crucified to the world, and having the world crucified to us. The world, and its pleasure, ease, respect, honour, commodities, delights and enticements, is a great enemy to all good works, and all good frames, and especially to a reconciliation with the Crosse of Christ. Love to the flesh, and to ease, as it prevaieth. Love to God and to all good decayeth. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the Love of the Father is not in him 1 *Joh. 2: vers 15.* And
e ither

either this world must be overcome by faith, or it will overcome us. We know what it did to Demas 2 Tim. 4: 10. The faith of that word *Joh. 12: 25. Mat. 10: 39. He that loveth his Life shall lose it, and he that hateth his Life in this world, shall keep it unto eternal Life*, would make all the faird of this world melt off.

3. A decay in faith cannot but cause this decay: When there is not that lively faith in God, of the promises, of Christs being crowned King, of the unchangableness of the Decrees and Purposes of God, of the rich recompence of reward, that is prepared for overcomers &c. it cannot otherwise be, but this Life, which is maintained and nourished by faith, must decay.

4 To these we may adde a suffering of the impression of the truth and dreadfulness of the Threatnings; of the greatness of the evil of falling away from approved Principles and Practices; of the hazard of declining in the least, in a day of trial; and of the great dishonour done to the Lord thereby, to wear off: For when the impression of these things weareth away, the fear of God departeth; and when we are not in the fear of God all the day, this life must necessarily decay.

The Consideration whereof should move all to guard against these evils, in a day of trial and persecution; and to studie withall earnestness the contrary duties, that the evils mentioned, and all others having reference thereunto, and depending thereupon, may be kepted off; and we kepted in case to glorifie the Lord, in our places and callings, whatever dispensation of providence we meet with.

CHAP. IV.

The just only are they, who
shall live this Life, in a time
of trouble and trial.

IT followeth in the next place, that we speak a word of the persons here designed, as the only or distinctive subjects of this privilege and advantage of Life, in such an evil time; as was formerly pointed forth. The privilege of Life, in such a time of death and distress, is no mean privilege: and here we see, it is not a common thing, but peculiar to the Just ones; *for the just shall live by faith.*

Now the question may be, Who are these
just

just ones? To which we may shortly answer thus: That through the whole Scripture, the truly Godly are thus called, and they only go under this denomination. Yet for further Satisfaction, we shall explain this matter both *Negatively*, and *Positively*.

And *first*, by *just ones* here, we must not understand.

1. Such as are only such in their own eyes, and judge themselves just and righteous persons, having no true, or scriptural ground to found their apprehensions upon: Such are those just persons, spoken of *Luk. 15: 7.* who have no need of repentance, blinded presumptuous souls, that dreame their condition is good, and they need not change their way; and so continue, and at length perish, See *Mat. 9: 13.*

2. Nor such, who are just in the eyes, and in the account of the world, being civilly or morally just, in their outward carriage with man; just in their dealings and barganes, having just weights and just measures, and dealing justly, without defrauding, or oppressing any: For even heathens may attaine to this; and so be just in this sense: and such may be understood *Ezek. 3: 20.* and *18: 26.*

3. Nor yet such as have, as to outwards,

a religious justness, in their way and walk ; as the Pharisees , who outwardly appeared righteous *Matth. 23 vers 28.* Every one, who hath a faire outward shew of Religion , is not the just man , that is here meant.

4. Nor, upon the other hand, Must we understand hereby one , that is just and righteous, so as he can be charged with no sin , or miscarriage ; for we know none such living , whatever some blind and vaine fantastick Persons pretend unto ; *1 King. 8. vers. 46. Prov 20: vers. 9. and 24. vers. 16. Eccl. 7. 20. 1 Job. 1: 8.* for even the just man, here understood , may fall seven times a day.

5. Nor must we understand here only him, who hath attained to a full assurance of faith , of hope, and of understanding, *Heb. 10: vers. 22. and 6: vers. 11. Col. 2 v. 2.* seeing many, who have not come this length, may be and are helped to this Life , by faith,

6. Nor yet must we understand only such, as have attained unto an high degree, and measure of grace and holiness , and are become old men in Christianity, and strong and well rooted in grace : for though these have a great advantage , in an evil day , of others , who are but young beginners; yet
his

it is sometimes found, that young beginners prove more stedfast, than some of those, who have been of a longer standing.

7. Nor must we understand here only such, as are great Christians, wise and prudent, having a great measure of light and knowledge, in the matters of God, so as they can disput and debate for the truth, and confound Adversaries with the power of reason: For though such have a great advantage of them, who are weak & more ready to be drawn away with every winde of Doctrine, and less able to foresee and discern the wiles of the Devil, and the crooked serpentine insinuations of men of corrupt mindes; yet others, who cannot disput for Christ, may be helped to burn for him.

8. Nor must we restrick this privilege only to those, who are righteous Persons of great Spiritual attainments, in experiences, and confirmations of Truth; & who have had much of the comforting, confirming, strengthening and corroborating influences of the Holy Ghost, and have drunk deep of the Spiritual joyes of the Holy Ghost. These, I grant, have a very great advantage; yet others, who have tasted little of all these great things, may get grace to live, in a time of deepest distress,

and may be carried thorow much tribulation, to the honour of the strong Captain of their Salvation.

But (to cleare the matter *affirmatively*) the *just man*, here meaned, is one, who.

1. Is made just by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, and declared to be and accepted as such by the Lord, who justifieth the ungodly, through that Cautionary righteousness of the Mediator, received & rested upon by faith: So that hereby is meaned the Person, who hath, in the conviction of sin and misery, and of an impossibility to get reliefe any other way, fled to Christ for refuge, revealed and held forth in the Gospel; and hath cast the whole weight and burden of his soul upon Christ, as the chosen one, upon whom help is laid. So that the just man here is the Beleever, who is now united to Christ, and through him, is reconciled to God; and a justified Person, who is in a state of favour with God through Jesus Christ, the only Peacemaker: and thus chiefly he is just.

2. One, Who having thus closed with the way of God, in Christ, is walking therein, through the Strength of Jesus, with all singleness and uprightness of heart, having respect to all the commandements of God; and so, having a principle of grace
and

and righteousness within, even the Spirit of Grace, is walking according to that principle, without hypocrisie, and dissimulation; and thus is perfecting holiness in the fear of God, running with his daily failings and infirmities, to the fountaine opened to the house of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem. The Just man is thus an upright man *Esai. 26. 7.* and a perfect man, walking with God, as is said of Noah *Gen. 6: v. 9.* A Good man, and a just man go together *Luk. 23: 50.* so a Just man is one that feareth God *Ast. 18. 22.*

So that, in short, the Just man, is one, that is reconciled to God, through Jesus Christ; and so is opposed to all, that are enemies to God, and living as enemies to Him, & to all his Interests & Concerns; and one that is, with truth and singleness of heart, doing just to all, giving God his due, and not robbing God, to please men, nor ascribing to men by flatterie what is not their due, nor taking from them what justly belongeth to them, by fraud or falshood: And thus, they are such, as exercise themselves to have alwayes a conscience, void of offence toward God, and toward men *Ast 24: 16.* and are working righteousness, as their trade and occupation *1. Job. 3: v. 7.* and walking in integrity *Prov. 20: 7.*

These are they, whom the Scripture accounteth Just and righteous Ones; howbeit, they have not great gifts, much experience, much feeling of Joy in the Holy Ghost, much victory over sin, but are falling through infirmity, seven times; nor clear light touching their faith and state, but are troubled with darkness doublings, and many temptations: And they are thus stiled *Just*, or *Righteous*, upon a double account: *First*, Upon the account of the Surety-righteousness of Christ imputed to them, whereby they become justified before God, and have all their iniquities pardoned. *Next*, Upon the account of their being made partakers of the Divine nature, principling them to works of Obedience to God, in all points: Whereby they, being friends to God, are devoted to Him, and lay forth themselves, for the glory of God, for the exalting of Christ; in all his Offices, and for the advancement of his Kingdom, in themselves, in others and in the whole world, according to their power.

Now it is these and these only, who have right to, and can expect this privilege of Life, in times of great Affliction, Temptation, and Persecution; and that for these reasons.

I. These

1. These only have this Life of God begun in them, which will and must be perfected; and all dispensations, that intervene, must promote and carry on this Life. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. 4: 18.

2. Unto these alone do the promises belong, whether of blessings in general; Ps. 3: v. last Prov. 10: 6. Or of out-gate and deliverance out of trouble Prov. 12. 13. — *but the just shall come out of trouble.* See also Proverb. 11: 8. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, Psal. 34: 19. *many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* See Psal. 97: 10. and many other places: or of support under trouble Psal. 37: v. 17. — *The Lord upholdeth the righteous.* Psal 55: ver. 22. — *He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved:* Or of preservation from the evil of it Prov. 12: 21. *There shall no evil happen to the just.* In a time of trouble he will hide such Psal. 27: 5. Or of strength in trouble Psal. 46: vers. 1. *He is a present help in times of trouble* Psal. 37: v. 39. *He is their strength in time of trouble;* Or of his presence with them Psal. 91: vers. 15. *I will be with him in trouble.*

3. It is to them only, that all things work together for good *Rom. 8: v. 29.* for they are lovers of God, and called according to his purpose.

4. It is they, and they only, that exercise faith, by which this Life is nourished and promoted. Others neither can, nor will believe; and therefore cannot live this Life through faith; as we shall shew afterward.

5. Only they have a right through Christ to all these good things, formerly mentioned, that are ingredients in this life, and contribute to make it up; as Peace, Joy, Hope, Access unto God, Patience, &c.

6. They only can make a special and spiritual improvement of the grounds of this life, and meanes contributing to it; and that to this end, that they may enjoy this life, in such an evil time: As shall be more especially shown hereafter.

From which we see 1. What is one maine cause, that so many fall off from Christ, in a day of trial, many of those, who in a day of prosperitie seemed good lively Christians, do discover themselves to be dead and rotten, in a day of adversity: Even because they were never really among the just ones, whatever outward appearance
and

and Profession there was. ^{on} I do not mean, that none will fainte and fall aside, in a trial, who have the root of the matter within them ; or that all such, as do fainte in a day of storme, and do not ride it out courageously, are to be looked upon as persons void of the grace of God ; for I know, that many such may discover much weakness, and their life may come under a sad decay ; but yet grace will recover them to their feet, at length. But as the want of the due exercise of grace in those who have grace, may be and is the cause of their yeelding to the temptation, and fainting in the day of adversitie ; so the want of the grace of God in reality is a certaine cause of the falling off of many, who seemed eminent Professours, in a day of Peace : These are of them, that draw back unto perdition *Heb.* 10: 39. because they have not beleev'd to the saving of the soul. Hence this is one cause of the Lords sending searching, and winnowing times, that the chaff may be discovered from the wheat. Such times are trying times. Christ taught us this, in the parable of the seed *Mat.* 13. Some receive the seed, as stonie places, that is hear the word, and anone with joy receive it, yet have not root in themselves, but endure for a while ; for when tribulation

tion or persecution ariseth because of the word, by & by they are offended, *vers. 20, 21.* The hour of temptation cometh to try them, that dwell upon the earth *Rev. 3:10* & when that hour cometh, doves depart from Christ, and his Truth, and turne with the times. Many, when there is no storme blowing in Christs face, will follow him, for loaves, for a name, for gaine; and will side with the good cause, when thereby places of gaine or of credite are to be had, who, when the winde turns, will let Christ stand alone. It is not Name-Christians, nor all Professours, that live by faith, in a day of trial. It is the *Just that shall live by faith.*

2. Hereby we see a great difference betwixt, the Just ones and others. In a faire day, as to outward appearance, some may seem to excell and far out-stripe others; and little real difference will be espied betwixt such as have the root of the matter, and such as have it not: But yet there is a great difference, even as great, as betwixt life & death. The just liveth, when others for all their broad leaves, and fair flourishes are but dead at the root.

3. If persons get grace to live, and to live by faith, in a day of Adversitie, so as, they can not, they dar not think of turning
their

their back on Christ, let the storme blow, as it will; they will not deny Him, or his Truth and Interest, whatever befall them; and being conscious of their own weakness, & fearing themselves, are therefore keeping neer the fountaine of strength and life, and begging supplies of grace, that they may be enabled to stand in the evil day, and kepted from giving a wrong touch unto the Ark of God, and from wronging his cause and interest, let follow what will; such persons, I say, may have all their doubts and scruples loosed, as to their state. It is the just that live by faith, in an evil day: and if they be living by faith, in an evil day, why may they not, why should they not conclude, that they are just, and among the justified ones?

4. If any would be kepted right in an evil day, and would faine ride - out the storme; let them first flee to Jesus by faith, and get their souls anchored on Him, who is the rock of ages; and when, through faith in him, they are made just, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, and are accepted and justified through Him, they may then have good ground of hope, that they shall be kepted standing, when many shall fall on the right hand, and on the left.

5. There

5. There is not much to be expected of such ; in a day of persecution, and trial for the word of truth, as have not closed with Christ in truth, according to the Gospel, for all their great Parts. Professions, and Engagements. Where Life is not at the roor, leaves will soon fall off, when the winde bloweshard and sharpe : *It is the Just that live by faith.*

6. Such as have closed a Covenant with Christ, and have put on the Lord Jesus by faith ; and are hence justified and sanctified through him, need not be anxiously fearful, or solicitous about their through-bearing in a day of trial. *The Just liveth by faith,* they will have a life of it, go matters as they will: if they minde their duty and walk in hol, fear, and keep neer to their Head. He will have a care of them. The apprehension then of approaching trials should not distemper them, nor cause them sinck in discouragment, as if there were no hope ; nor conclude that they shall fall by the way, and not be carried thorow the sea of trial, that is before them. Here is ground for such to lay aside these distemp-ering, unhingeing, and discouraging thoughts, and to lay the matter on the Lord, by faith, and commit unto him, as unto a faithful Creator, the keeping of
their

their souls, in such an evil time: Yet withall, they would bewar of carnal confidence, or of security, and of neglect of the exercise of humility, godly fear, and dependance upon the Lord.

7. It should be no astonishing thing to see so many fall away, in a trying time, notwithstanding of former ample Professions, strick Obligations, peremptour Engagements, resolute Promises, Purposes, Vowes and Oathsto stand fast, and abide by the truth: For it is *the Just that live by faith*; and many may come under outward Obligations, Covenants, Vowes and Engagements to adhere to Christ and to his Interest; and yet be strangers to justifying graces; many may be outwardly called, and give an outward ear unto the call, who yet may be none of the chosen ones; and who belong not to that number shall never be among the Just: And *the Just only live by faith*.

8. Many, in the beginning of a storme, and of a turne, may seem couragious and stedfast, and do very many promising things, upon the account of a name; and plaine shame of the world may cause some stand-out the first blast; and yet be strangersto this Life; because never reconciled

never reconciled unto God, through Christ, so that all these motions and stirrings, whatever they appeared to be, were no Acts of Life, or of such as were just; which the continuance or growth of the storme will soon discover to have been but lifeless fairds, and natural motions; for it is *the just that live by faith.*

CHAP. V.

**This throw-bearing Life, in
an evil time, is only
by faith.**

THe last thing that is considerable, in these words, is the meanes, whereby this life is had; and that is faith. *The just shall live by faith.* It is only then by faith, in exercise, that the Godly (formerly described) win to that Life, (which we have explained) in such an evil time. (as was formerly declared)

For explaining of this, and for making way to what followeth to be spoken to, we must speak a little to these things. 1. Concerning the Nature of this Faith. 2. Concerning its Operations and Actings, in order to attaining of a Life, in an evil day. 3. To the grounds of this truth, that the just live

live by faith: and these being cleared, in some measure, the inferences therefrom, and particularly the usefulness and necessity of the constant exercise of faith, will be plaine and obvious.

As to the first, the Nature of this faith. We would not mistake here, and take every thing for faith, that we may, by a mistake, conceive to be it: and therefore to speak to this, in the first place, *negatively*, we would know.

1. That this faith is not a groundless Presumption, or a confidence, that some have, whereby they conclude, that all will go well with them, & they need not fear: & therefore turne careless and secure, and forget the necessity that there is for them, to stand upon their watch-toure, and to walk circumspectly.

2. Nor is this faith any natural Confidence, and Assurance, that they will be carried thorow, and shall never depart from the truth, be their hazard what it will; possibly founded upon this, that they think the storme will not last long, or that they have endured as great blasts before.

3. Nor is it any carnal Courage and Stoutness of heart, whereby they think to double out the trial; which may arise from meer pride

pride, and be principled by meer shame, or such like outward respects.

4. Nor is it any stoical Insensibility, nor unconcernedness and unaffectedness, with what occurreth, Faith is a most sensible thing, and bringeth not on a lethargy on the soul, nor doth it contract a *callum*, or scurfe of hardness or indifferency, in these matters.

5. Nor is it the gift of Understanding, or an historical faith, receiving, by the light of the understanding, the truthes of God revealed in his word; or a rational Conviction of the truth, grounded on manifest evidences and promises, to the satisfaction of the rational intellect.

6. Nor yet is it any rare, but unsanctified, Communication of pleasure, sweetness, tickling, joy, or delectation, in the truth received, which will sometimes accompany the intellectual embracing of the truth, like that mentioned *Heb. 6: v. 4, 5*.

But on the other hand (that we may shew more *positively*, what it is) we would take notice of these Particulars.

1. That it is a spiritual saving grace, wrought only by the Spirit of God, importing a renovation and change of the whole frame of the soul; and a work far beyond the power of Nature; for it is the pure gift
of

of God , through Jesus Christ *Ephes. 2: 8.*
Phil. 1: 29.

2. That it is such a grace , as carrieth the soul out of it self , for all supplies , to seek them and finde them elsewhere: A grace , that will not suffer the Soul to build on any thing within it self , how specious and promiseing - like soever ; for it is a self denying grace ; and causeth the Soul despaire in it self , and renunce all hope and expectation of help , strength and throw-bearing in and from it self.

3. It is such a grace , as , though it will not suffer any , in whom it is , to despise the meanes , appointed of God , or to lay them aside ; for it is an enemy unto presumption ; so , as to its expected help and reliefe , it looketh , and airteth the soul to look , beyond all those meanes and instruments. For

4. As it carrieth the soul unto God through Jesus and uniteth the soul to Christ , and to God through Christ , and keepeth the soul in Christ ; so it acteth the soul towards Christ , and prompteth and principeth it unto a dependance solely upon him , for all that is necessary , for carrying thorow in an evil time.

5. Though the man sometimes , through darkness , dar not confidently , and explicitly

citly owne the Lord, as his God, and Christ as his Redeemer, nor the promises as his allowance; yet this grace inclineth, naturally and kindly, the soul God-ward and Christ-ward; and keepeth the soul hanging upon the Lord, and expecting supplies from that airth alone; and causeth the soul look toward the promises, as flowing from free grace, and as the conduite pipes through which come the help, relief and strength. that is called for, and all these good things, which are purchased by Christ.

6. By this grace, as the man is made to see his own emptiness and necessitie, and therefore to see how necessarie it is that he have continual supplies of influences, for carrying of him thorow; so it principeth the soul to an hanging upon God, in Christ, and to a looking to the promises, as yea and amen, in Christ, and to wait upon the Lord, in that posture, with the mouth at the promise of God, who cannot lie, sucking, as it were, at this brest, and drawing the continual supplies requisite, for his reliefe, and help.

This motion and working of soul may be, where there is little or no Confidence or Boldness to assert an interest in God, as theirs; little or no Perswasion of the sinceritie of their faith; little or no Challenging
of

of the promises as theirs : But on the contrary , there may be much fear and trembling , much doubting and darkness ; yet there will be such a warmth of soul towards Christ and all his Interests : and such a lothness to do any thing , that may be but interpretatively a wronging of Christ , and his Cause , as will kindle earnest desires to be kept true and honest to him ; and presse them to seek the presence of the Lord , and the help of his grace ; and to look to him , according to his word , with a resolution , through his assisting grace , never to deny Him , or flench from the truth , let their trouble and persecution , upon the account of that , be never so hore.

Secondly , That we may understand more of the way of a beleevers living by faith , in a time of tribulation , we shall shew something of its actings , in reference to such a time ; first in general , and then more particularly.

In General , *Paul* tells us , that faith is the substance of things hoped for , and the evidence of things not seen *Heb. 11: 1*. It giveth to the soul , as it were , an antidated possession of the things promised , realizing them , and giving them a subsistence , and being , by the fast ground that it layeth hold on , whereby the soul may have , and hath

H

according

according to the measure of this Operation, a firme confidence of the matter. The *Syriack* Version doth thus fitly Paraphrase the words, *Faith is the certainty of those things, which are in hope, as if now they did actually exist.* And this it effectuaterh by these Acts

1. Faith taketh up God aright, and hath right apprehensions of his Nature and Properties; seeth Him to be True, and Faithful; one that cannot lie *Tit. 1: 2. Heb. 6: v. 18.* He will not be unto his a liar, and as waters that fail *Jer. 15: 18.* Faith seeth him true and faithful, and that his words are tried words *Psal. 12: v. 6. and 18: v. 30.* And seeth him also to be Constant and Unchangeable, in his Purposes, Decrees, Resolutions and Promises; for there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning with him *Jam. 1: 17.*

2. As faith considereth the fountaine spring, the well head of all the promises, to be free grace, and undeserved love, which is infinite, eternal and unchangeable; and consequently can not grow less, weare away, decay, or wax weake; so it looketh upon all the good things promised, as now ratified and confirmed by the blood of the Covenant; and consequently, as yea and Amen in Christ Jesus *2 Cor. 1: 20.*

3, Faith

3. Faith runneth back, that it may get a sure footing place, unto the Covenant of Redemption, made betwixt Jehovah, and the Son of God, the Mediator and Cautioner; and there seeth all the promises, made principally to Christ, as Head of the chosen, or as belonging to and comprehended under these articles of Agreement, or of the Covenant of Peace, that was betwixt them both; and so made to beleivers, as in Christ: Yea faith eyeth both parties, Covenanters in that bargane, as engaged to other, in point of Honour and Faithfulness, in the behalfe of the weak followers of Christ, securing their thorowbearing and certaine Salvation, in all the steps thereof; so far as shall tend to Gods glory and their good. Davids faith got a sure grip of this Covenant Psal. 89. and therefore he beginneth that song, saying, *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations, for I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish, in the very heavens.*

4. Faith eyeth the Almighty power of Jehovah, against which there is no standing, as engaged to make out what He hath said, and to bring about, what He hath purposed and promised; and this

rendereth all difficulties light, and inconsiderable, *Abraham did not consider his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred yeers old. Neither yet the deadness of Sarahs womb: Why? Because, he was fully perswaded that what he had promised, he was able also to performe Rom. 4: 19, 21.* This also did his faith fix on, when he was tried, to offer up *Isaac*, his onely begotten Son, of whom it was said, that in *Isaack* shall thy seed be called; for he accounted, that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, *Heb. 11: 17, 18, 19.*

5. Faith seeth the hand of Christ ordering all and every one of the particular circumstances of the trial, that the poor believer is under, and is exercised with: It seeth all power in heaven and earth given unto Him, and all judgment committed unto him, and the managment of all affaires concerning the Church, and every particular member of his mystical body: and therefore seeth Wise and Faithful and Tenderhearted Jesus measuring-out the exercise in all its degrees, and ordering all its ingredients; and fixeth on that, as a firme truth, *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it 1 Cor. 10: 13.*

6. Faith

6. Faith carrieth all the Difficulties, Feares, Doubts, Temptations, which the man is under, or apprehendeth to come, to, and rolleth all upon the Lord Christ, that He may bear them; and so cause them to bear them, or stand under them; and thus it doth also with all Duties; because faith walketh upon this ground, that God must worke in them both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure, *Phil. 2: v. 13.* and that it is He that worketh all their works in them, *Esaï. 26: vers. 18.* or to them; as as it were, to their hand: And thus the Beleever liveth and suffereth in Christ.

But for further clearing of this, there are some special aſtings of faith, in a time of perplexity and trial; which will help us to see, how by faith, there is a life to be had, in time of saddest trouble: We cannot reckon up all these; a few instances will serve for illustration

I. When sin stareth the poor suffering beleevers in the face, whether National finnes, or Personal finnes; and the conviction of this is like to dash all their hopes, and utterly to deject and cast them down; faith can help at this sad juncture; by taking up and looking to the Lord, as one that Pardoneth iniquitie for his own Names sake,

sake, according to that *Eesai. 43: 25.* I even
I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions, for
mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.
 Faith looketh upon him, as one that is mer-
 ciful, and will not keep anger for ever; if we
 will but acknowledge our iniquity *Ier. 3: 12, 13.*
 and seeth him to be merciful and gracious,
 slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, who
 will not alwayes chide, neither keep his
 anger for ever *Psal 103: vers. 8. 9.* Moses
 knew well, how to make use of this sheild,
 when the Lord had threatned, because of
 their murmuring, to disinherit them,
 when he said *Numb. 14: vers. 17, 18, 19.*
And now I beseech thee, let the power of my
Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken,
saying: The Lord is long suffering and of great
mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression —
Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this peo-
ple, according unto the greatness of thy mercy;
and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt,
even until now. Former pardons abused did
 not discourage him, or stop his mouth;
 nay, even that was an argument to faith, be-
 cause the Mercy of God was great, and
 could not be exhausted. So doth the Church
 in *Micah. 7: 18.* by faith take up God, as
 a Non-such pardoner, and as one, that
 delighted in mercy, who is a God like unto
 thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by
 the

the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage: He retaineth not his anger for ever; because he delighteth in mercy. And hence in the following verses draweth soul-strengthening conclusions. He will turne againe, He will have compassion upon us, He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt performe the truth to Jacob, &c.

2. When nothing appeareth, that can give any probable ground of hope, that the promise shall be accomplished, yea many things would seem to say, that there would be no performance, and that the Lord had forgotten his Promises. Even then faith will not give it over, but taketh a broad look of that broad object, the Faithfulness of God; and discovereth it to be incomparable, incomprehensible, and inconceivably great, *Psal. 89: 8. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee; or to thy faithfulness round about thee? So Ps. 36: v. 5, 6. Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds: Thy righteousness is like the great mountains. (or like the mountains of God:) faith takes him up, as a God, that will not suffer his faithfulness to fail, according as He hath said himself *Psal. 39: 33. and cryeth out with the Church in the Lament. 3: 23. Great is thy faithfulness:**

faith seeth, that no vicissitudes, changes or alterations, that are through ages and generations, do in the least impeach, or weaken his faithfulness, for it is to all generations, *Psal. 89: ver. 1. and 119. vers. 90.*

3. When insuperable-like difficulties stand in the way of the accomplishment of the promises; reason cannot reach it, sense is blinde and cannot see, how it can be: Yet faith will not give it over; but looketh to God, as one, that can do wonders *Psal. 77: 14.* and as one to whom nothing is impossible *Luk. 1: 37. and 18: 27.* and doth whatsoever he will, in heaven and in earth *Psal. 135: 6.* We see how *Abraham's* faith wrought *Heb. 11: ver. 19.* Hence the Church, can in a manner, call for miracles *Esai. 64: 1, 2.* *Oh that thou wouldest rent the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountaines might flow down at thy presence; as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil.* Which is as much, as if the Church had said, though there were no other way for our delivery, but such an extraordinary and miraculous way; yet we are bold to seek it, that way, ere we be not delivered.

4. When there is no probability of an outgate from within, but all things in the Church,

Church, or in their own hearts, are so discouraging like, that they can get nothing to pitch upon, that may give any encouragement, or ground whereupon they can plead with God; or when all things are so dark about them, that they know neither, what to think or say: faith, even in that mistie houre, when it can see nothing round about it, will look up to God, and even draw an argument from Him, who is, by his dispensations, manifesting his displeasure and anger against them; and plead from his Name, and his Honour, that is engaged. Thus wrought faith in *Josue* Chap. 7:9. — *and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?* The Dispensation was such a surprizal of judgment, and so circumstantial, that it had a very terrifying aspect; and when he knew not what to say, but that he saw ruine approaching them, and that he wished they had never come over Jordan, he pitcheth upon this argument, the Name of God, that was engaged, and could not but suffer, if there were not a change in his dispensations. So did *Moses*, when the Lord had said, he would destroy the people, and make of him a great Nation *Numb: 14: 13.* as not regarding that offer (an instance of self denial, to astonishment) and as more concerned with the Glory and

H 5

Name

Name of God, that would suffer, and not be repaired by the Lords making of him a stronger & mightier Nation; he pleadeth with the Lord upon this account: that if he should destroy all that people, as one man, the Nations, that have heard of the fame of him, would speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the Land, which he sweare unto them; therefore he hath slaine them, in the wilderness: So doth the Church make use of this same Argument Psal. 79: 9. *Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us, and purge away our sin, for thy names sake.* Elsewhere also we finde this argument made use of: and what wonder, that faith lay hold on this, seing upon this very ground, the Lord hath oft wrought deliverances for his people, that his name might not be polluted among the heathen, as we see Ezek. 20: vers. 9, 14, 22.

5. When all things look discouraging like, so that such, as would plead in the behalfe of a Church, cannot know well what to say; or can see nothing in it to give ground of hope: Faith can see something, that will be supporting; for it can plead with the Lord, by telling him, what he hath done of old, and call to minde the yeers of ancient times, and consider the
 dayes

dayes of old; the yeers of the right hand of the most High, his works and wonders of old, as it is *Psal.* 77: 5, 10, 11. and this will prove reviving, and lift up the head, in hope; Thus we see the Church insisting much upon this *theme*, and urging this argument, when she hath little else to say, as *Psal.* 80: 8 &c. So *Psal.* 89: 10. *Thou hast broken Rabab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arme* and *Psal.* 74: 13, 14 15. and 77: v. 15, 16, 17, 18. And though the Consideration of the former great works of the Lord might prove discouraging, partly because of an unanswerable walking in his people, whereupon those former mercies might now prove aggravations of their guilt; partly also because, the Tempter might hence inferre, that God had forsaken, and had given them up, and would no more owne them, or appear for them: yet faith can hence see, the Lord engaged to perfect what he hath begun: For his works must all be perfect *Psal.* 18. 30. And to owne further his Church, that He hath appeared for and purchased *Psal.* 74: 2. *Remember thy Congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed.* Faith will urge, that all God's former paines and cost, as it were, must

not be in vaine ; and that Enemies must not have it to say , that God was not able to perfect what he had begun , and therefore changed his mind ; which were highly derogatorie unto the Glory of the Lord.

6. When a soul hath lost sight of all former Experiences , and spiritual Manifestations , Works and Appearances of the Lord ; or through temptation is scarred from making any comfortable improvement thereof, in the present day of distress; faith can cause some reviving in hope, by looking to , and improving temporal and common mercies and favours : So we finde David pleading thus with God *Psal. 71: v. 6.* *thou art he , that took me out of my mothers bowels :* And many such Arguments hath he in the *Psalmes* : And we possibly think that there could be little force in such an argument, seing every wicked wretch could say the same , as well as *David* : But faith knoweth how to improve the commonest mercy , as a special mercy ; for it looketh on the meanest and commonest of them , as purchased by Christ, who , seing he hath bought so many to heaven, to sing his praises as Redeemer, forever , he hath also in the bargan , that they should be preserved saife in their mothers womb , brought out of their

their mothers bowels in saisty, preserved so long from death, till the mansions were prepared for them: thus faith readeth special love, in these common favours; for as to the ransomed ones, they run in a channel of free grace and everlasting love: and faith seeth a connexion betwixt these and more special and spiritual favours; and as they are in the hand of a Father, and ordered by him, and have a tendency to promote their spiritual good, which they have through the blessing of the Lord; so that even, by the consideration of these, which are obvious, when other more special mercies can not be apprehended, and with confidence improven, faith can suck reviving strength.

7 When in reference to a Church all things look dark and dismal like, all being broken, and out of order, and his broken among themselves, yea divided and subdivided, in judgment and affection; yea in such a condition, as would prognostick as sad things, as what they may be under presently, even though they were delivered from under the present rod, and freed, from the present pressing dispensations; so that the people of God, that consider all these things, cannot tell what to ask or desire of the Lord; are not certain that a

delivery from the present dispensation, under which they are, would be their mercy. This doubtless is a very sadning, and heart-breaking dispensation, and enough to cause one conclude the case desperat: Yet even in such a case, as this is, faith can breathe, and bring-in a cordial unto a fainting soul, by eying the Lord, as one, that can finish *the account, and cut the work short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth* Rom. 9 28. faith can pause and meditate upon these words *Eesai. 66; vers. 7, 8, 9. Before she travelled, she brought forth, before her pain came, she was delivered of a manchild: who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such a thing? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once; for as soon as Zion travelled she brought forth her children? Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth, saith the Lord? Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith the Lord? Faith will say, if the Redeemer come, all Divisions, all Animosities, all Distances, all Prejudices, all Mistakes, all Darknesses shall vanish; one blinke of the Kings face shall cause all his Loyal Subjects flock together, and forget their privat quarrels; if he but once look over the mountains, the very dawning of his day shall send light from*

East

East to West, and shall dispel all darkness and cloudes; that in his light, they, who formerly wandered in darkness, shall see Light.

8. When the honest Sympathizer with the Church, and Wrestler for her, can see no token for good, in her; can espie nothing in her disposition and frame, that can give encouragment, or prove a plausible ground of hope: And when possibly sense of guilt, and conscience of abuse of former loving kindnesses, scarrerth from a confident approach unto God, to plead upon these grounds: Yet, even then faith can help unto a life of hope, and plead upon the Nature, Disposition, Cruelty, Inveterate Malice, and Hatred, Rage, Power, and Blasphemie of the Enemies. How oft finde we *David* holding forth the wicked disposition, the cruel carriages, profane and godless pranks, outrageous and blasphemous belchings of his Enemies? See *Psal.* 9: 6. and 74: v. 3, 10, 18. and 13: 4. and 56: 2. and 69: v. 4. and 71: 10. and many other places. So doth *Hezekiah* spread *Rabshakeb's* failings before the Lord. We see how *Moses* did plead upon this account *Numb.* 14. Nay, the Lord himself giveth ground for this, and faith looketh well to that, and draweth comfort from it *Deut.* 32: 26, 27. *I said,*
I would

I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their Adversaries should behave themselves strangely; lest they should say, our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this. This was the ground of the sad desolations, threatened against mount Seir Ezek. 35: 10, 11, 12, 13. Because thou hast said, these two Nations and these two Countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the Lord was there. Therefore as I live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used, out of thine hatred against them — and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy b'asphemies, which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel: saying, they are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth, ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard, &c. Thus the Lord threatened to do to this cruel and unnatural Brother: And the like we have against Moab and Ammon Zeph. 2: 8, 9, 10. I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the Children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border. Therefore, as I live saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely

surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the Children of Ammon as Gomorrah, the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation, the residue of my people shall spoile them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. This shall they have for their pride, because they reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord God. We see also, in the prophetic of Obadiab, how the Lord taketh notice of Esaus violence against his brother Jacob. Moreover faith stateth these enemies, before the Lord, as his enemies, and as engaged in war against Him, as taking his name in vaine, Psal. 139: 20. as roaring in the midst of his Congregations, as casting fire into his Sanctuary, as defiling the dwelling place of his Name to the very ground; as blaspheming his Name Ps. 74: 3, 4, 7, 10. and this giveth ground of hope, that whatever the Lords people be, the Lord will take course with his own enemies, and judge them for the wrongs they have done to Himself, and to his Interest, for their enmitie & malice against Himself. And howbeit his people cannot but acknowledge the Lords righteousness, in punishing them by these proud, profane, blasphemous & wicked enemies, who are the rod in his hand; yet faith can make much of this, that as to these enemies, they are innocent, having

ing deserved no such thing at their hands ; & that these enemies are persecuting them, because they will not sin and rebel more against God ; and renunce him, as they have done ; and because they owne the Lord and his Interest, in some measure , by some poor and inconsiderable Profession ; and the more they cleave to God, and carry like saints, the more they are hated with pure hatred ; so that the maine quarrel is , because they have some relation to God, some interest in him, and some adherence to him ; it is for his sake , that they are killed all the day long *Psal.* 44: v. 22. and bear reproach *Psal.* 69: 7. *Jer.* 15: 15. See *Matth.* 5. 11: and 10: v. 18, 22. *Mark.* 13: 9, 13. *Luk.* 21: v. 12, 17. and 7: 24. *Mark.* 8: 35. *Mat.* 10: 39: and 16: 25. and 24: 9.

9. When dispensations would say, there is no hope , the Lord will not heare , he hath said , he will destroy and make an end: What more discouraging and fainting thought can there be , then this ? What can support in such a case ? What can keep from despondency and utter despaire ? Yet faith can with an humble importunity , renew its suite, and say , O Lord, I cannot take that for my last answer , I will waite for another. The people of Israel *Judg.* 10: got a sad answer to their first suite *vers.* 11, 13,

14. even this in exprels termes, *wherefore I will deliver you no more.* Which was not only a refusing to grant their desire, but a refusal founded upon grounds of Justice and equity, and deduced by a lawful consequence from their former miscarriages: Yet they gave it not over for all this, but renewed their suite, and the Lords soul was grieved for the misery of Israel; he could not, as it were, say them nay. So when the Lord threatned to destroy Israel in the wilderness, for making the Golden Calfe, and said to Moses *Exod. 32: 10, Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great Nation,* did Moses, upon this sad and discouraging word, give over the matter as desperate? No, he would not take that for his last answer, but pleaded with the Lord on their behalfe, in the following Verses; and the Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to do unto his people *vers. 14.* The like valiant exercise of faith, we see in the Woman of *Canaan Mat. 15.*

10. When Temptation would say, how can we look for such a thing? Was there ever a case parallel to ours? Have we an instance of any such precedent; that a people, in such a case, were so delivered
and

and brought out of trouble: And when the serious soul is running hither and yond, and making a diligent search to finde out a parallel case, to give it comfort; and through Confusion, Prejudice, or Perplexity of heart, can fall upon none; sure the case must be very sad, and disconsolate: But will faith finde any ground of hope and comfort, in such a case, as this? Yes, faith can answer all these Objections, and repel all these Discouragements with this. The Lord can do a new thing, according as he hath said *Esa. 43: 18, 19.* *Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.* Faith can look upon the Lord, as an absolute Prince, who can create new meanes, new methods; and go out of all former roads, for the glory of his Name.

II. When temptation would say, how can such a mercy and delivery be expected, when people are so out of frame, so little humbled by all the strokes they have been under, as stubborn and rebellions, as ever? is not this the Lords usual way, to bring his people first upon their knees, to make them confess their sinnes, and give glory

glory unto the Lord? and when there is nothing of this, how can an outgate be expected. This is sad, and very dejecting. But what will faith do now, for a life in this case? Faith hath several noble actings to support in this case; for it can say, If the Lord think good to follow this his usual method, he may; and yet it will conceive hope; because faith will put the healing of backslidings on Him, whose work alone it is, and lay it at his door; who only can do it, and thereupon plead with him, that he would turne his people, saying *turne us and we shall be turned*; as the Lord taught Ephraim to say, even when they were like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke Jer. 31. 18. and as the people were taught to pray in the captivity Lam. 5: 21 Faith can also see, that the Lord can take Sovereigne wayes; for the shewing forth of the Sovereignty of his grace; and therefore, may first deliver outwardly, and then pour forth of his Spirit; as Ezek 36: 24, 25. *For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all Countries, and will bring you into your own land: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. &c.* Faith can call to minde, that many such things are with Him; according
to

to that wonderful dispensation promised *Esa. 57: 16, 17, 18.* For I will not contend for ever; neither will I be alwayes wroth; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls I have made: for the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth: and smote him, I bid me and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his bears: I have seen his wayes, and I wil heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.

12: When Temptation with humane reason are proposing many strong difficulties, and insolluble knots, and hard questions, that the tossed man cannot answere. In this case faith can furnish a cordial, and take a course, that cannot but make the soul lift up his head in hope: and that is, when Questions and Objections are proposed, whether by one, or other, which the man cannot answere, faith takes them away to God, who can answere; and puts them in the hand of Sovereigne wisdom and grace, to loose knots of difficulties, and make Connexious and Consistencies, which none else can. as taught to do so by God's example *Jer. 3: v. 19.* where the Lord proposeth the question, *How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant Land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of Nations?* And who could answere this question? Could Israel
answere

answere it, who had dealt treacherously with God, as a wife dealeth treacherously with her husband, *vers.* 20. No surely. But the Lord answereth it himself, saying, *And I said, Thou shalt call me, my Father, and shalt not turne away from me:* That is, God would make them to be, what they were not; he would make them renew their Covenant againe with him, and give them grace to stand to it. Faith eyeth Him, as one, that can make wonderful connexious; such as that *Eesai.* 43: 22, 23 24, 25. Sad things the Lord is laying to their charge, their not calling upon him, their being wearie of him, and of his service and publick worships; that in stead of serving him with their substance, they made him serve with their sins. and wearied him with their iniquities. Now what would any think should be the next word? might not any suppose, that it would be some heavie threatning? and yet with a special *Emphasis*, he saith, *I, I he, that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* Another Instance we have *Eesai.* 59. where from the beginning there is nothing but sin, and that particularly branched forth, charged upon them, and strokes following thereupon, and yet no amendement, but growth in all sort of wickedness; and matters were come

to that height, that judgment was turned away backward, Justice stood afar off, truth was fallen in the streets, and equity could not enter; yea truth failed, and he that departed from evil made himself a prey: And this the Lord saw, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment; and he saw, that there was no man, and wondered that there was no Intercessour *vers. 14, 15, 16.* And was not this a very desperat-like case? What could be expected next, but utter upgiving? Yet see what a connexion and consequence the Sovereignty of grace maketh. *Therefore his arme brought salvation to him, and his righteousness it sustained him, &c.* Many moe such might be named, but these may serve for an instance.

By all which we see, how faith, by its special and more rare actings, contributeth unto this life, in a day of calamitie and distress, publick or private. A word now of the Scriptural grounds of this truth, that *the just live by faith* (which was the thing to be spoken to, in the Third place) will serve for confirmation.

And first, As for the life of *Justification*, that this is by faith, will not be much questioned by any, who readeth *Paul's Epistles*, especially that to the *Romans*, and that to the

the *Gallatians*, where this truth is not only asserted, but demonstrated by many Arguments. We shall not therefore insist in citing places to this end, seeing the evincing of this is the scope of a considerable part of those Epistles. It is enough, that the Apostle hath told us, in both those Epistles, that in reference to Justification, whereof he is there treating, the *Just shall live by faith*, *Rom. 1: 17. Gal. 3: 11.*

Secondly, It is no less clear and evident, that the Life of *Sanctification* is by faith: for by it Christ dwelleth in the heart *Ephes. 3: 17.* and by it the heart is purified *Act. 15: 9.* and the world is overcome *1 Joh. 5: 4.* And the Apostle asserts this plainly and expressly, *Gal. 2: 20.* ——— *And the Life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* Faith setteth to obedience *Heb. 11: v. 7, 8.*

So 3. The Life of *Peace* is through faith; for being justified by faith, we have Peace with God *Rom. 5: v. 1.* It is in Christ, to whom we must be united by faith, that we have Peace, *Joh. 16: 33.* He keeps them in perfect Peace, whose mindes are stayed on him, because they trust in Him, *Esai. 26: vers. 3.*

4. The Life of Access to and Communion with God, is also had and kept up

by faith. This Boldness and Access with Confidence is by the faith of Christ *Ephes. 3: v. 12.*

5. The Life of *Hope* is likewise by faith, for hope groweth out of the stock of faith, and cannot be without it, there is a beleeving in Hope. And the Church *Lam. 3: 24.* foundeth her hope upon this. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul: therefore have I hope.* David charged his soul to hope in God, and why? Because he was the health of his Countenance and his God *Psal. 42. and 43.*

6. The Life of *Patience* is through faith, He who beleeveth will not make haste, *Eesai. 28: 16.* and therefore will waite in Patience. And the trying of faith worketh Patience *1 Sam. 1: 3.* What made *Micah*, in name of the Church *Chap. 7: 7.* say, *I will look unto the Lord, I will wait?* Because of what is added, *for the God of my Salvation: My God will hear me.* So *Eesai. 25: v. 9.* *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us.*

7. So the Life of *Courage, Resolution, and Establishment* is through faith. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God *1 Sam. 30: v. 6.* Standing fast in the faith, and being strong go together *1 Cor. 16: 13.* *Beleeve in the Lrd your God* (said good King *Jehosaphat*)

(that 2 Chron. 20: v. 20.) so shall you be established. And Esaias said Chap. 7: v. 9. If ye will not beleeve, surely ye shall not be established.

8. So finally, the Life of Joy is through faith. What made Habbakuk reioice over all supposable discouragements? He was the God of his Salvation, The Lord God was his strength: and he was sure, he would make his feet like bindes, and make him to walk upon his high places Hab. 3: 18, 19.

Thus we see how the Scripture confirmeth this Truth. That the just live by faith, and that as to all its parts or ingredients.

We saw before CHAP. III. what ground of grief and sorrow there was, upon the account that there was so little of this life, here spoken of, in a day of trouble, evidenced by several considerable Symptomes of a decay hereof: and here we may see the cause thereof; to wit, want of, or a decay in the lively exercise of Faith: For this life is had, keepeed and nourished by faith: and when faith is lively and strong, this life receiveth a proportionable vigour; and it decayeth and falleth back, as faith becometh languid and weak. And that it is thus with faith to day, as to too many, these things may evidence.

I. Is it not manifest and undeniable, that the changes and alterations we finde in our frames and disposition, whereby we are sometimes lifted up, and againe at other times cast down, depende upon, and are caused by the probability or improbability of reliefe, help or outgate, that we observe in outward dispensations; so as when any thing occurreth or falleth out, that hath a promising aspect, in our Apprehensions unto a Delivery, we are lifted up above measure; and againe, when these hopfull-like appearances evanish a little out of our sight, we are as much dejected, as ever we were elevated; yea and our disappointment maketh our down-casting more grievous and afflicting, whereas were we living by faith, it would not be thus with us; because the grounds, whereupon faith standeth, are more fixed and unvariable; the Promiser and the Promises remaining still the same, whatever clouds, tossed and carried with windes, intercept the light and warmth thereof, and whatever outward dispensations may seem to say: these may alter daily, as the Lord seeth fit; yet the Lord abideth the same, without all change or shadow of turning *Am. 1: 17.* His thoughts are to all Generations *Psal. 33: v. 11.* and his truth endureth to all generations

tions *Psal.* 100: v. 5. so that the pure ground of faith is immovable, like the great mountains: were our faith anchored and fixed upon this ground, we could not but be more equable in our deportment, under all the manifold Changes and Alterations, in outward appearances.

2. Our fainting, sincking through discouragement, and our heartlesness, when we see not all things going to our mind, is another evidence of the want of this lively exercise of faith: For were our hearts fixed, trusting in the Lord, all the sad aspect of outward Dispensations would, not take both heart and hand from us, nor unhinge us, nor make us so weak, as we could stand under no burthen: Were faith in exercise, our strength would remaine with us; for they that waite upon the Lord shall renew their strength *Eesai.* 40: v. 31. *I had fainted* (as it is supplied *Psal.* 27: 13.) *unless I had beleev'd to see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living*: unless he had acted faith thus, he could not tell what a sad case he had been into; in a manner, he had been no man more, he had been nothing.

3. This is also evident by another sad effect thereof; which is the many inward unsutable thoughts, and reasonings of mind

handsome Questions, Inward Grudgings, Quarrellings, Repineings, and Wonderings and Amazement; which argue more, that we live by sense, than that we live by faith: Faith in exercise would soon hush all these disorderly and unsutable motions to the door, and keep the soul in a composed, peacable, well satisfied, and waiting posture. The want of the exercise of hope, which is accompanied with and caused by the want of the exercise of faith, is the cause of the souls being disquieted within a man *Psal.* 42, and 43.

4. As also this is too evident by the abounding and predomincing of carnal fears, which prove most noxious unto the soul, not only indisposing it for present duty, but also makeing it a prey for every winde of temptation: Whileas faith doth ballast the soul, and putteth the man in case to resist the Devil, and to quench his fiery darts *I Pet.* 5: v. 9. *Ephes.* 6: 16. Faith dispelleth all the blake and melancholious clouds of fear, and hardeneth the soul against them, as we see *Psal.* 27: v. 1, 2, 3. and 46: 1, 2.

5. The too much abounding of carnal security and stupiditie, is another evidence of a decay in faith; for where it is in vigour and life, the soul is kepted in a watching
and

and diligent frame : faith keepeth the heart tender , and maketh the man keep far off from every appearance of evil , and every course , that may in the least dishonour the Lord : As it is an enemy to carnal and slavish fear ; so it is the great fosterer of godly fear , and a friend to it : Faith is accompanied with a watchful tenderness , especially in a day of temptation ; and it maketh the soul careful that there be no sinful ceding or yielding unto the Tempter ; and causeth it guard against the sinful byas or inclination of the evil time : But when men are gone from their watchtower , and asleep , or under the power of a Spirit of indifferency , in the Lord's Matters , there can be little of the exercise of this grace of faith there.

6. The disquieting and distracting cares and thoughts about events , is another evidence of the weakness of faith : The believing soul hath rolled all these upon the Lord , and looketh upon them , as none of his concernment , but as properly belonging to the Lord , who is the great Rector of the World , and Disposer of all things , both within and without the Church ; and looketh upon duty , as the maine of his concernment , and so is freed of these Vexing Distracting , Tormenting,

menting, and Perplexing thoughts and cares about this event, or that event. The people in the wilderness were vexed with cares about their livelihood and provision; and when they got one thing, they were vexed with the thoughts, how they should get another thing, which they desired; and therefore had many tempting questions; but all flowed from this. *They beleevd not in God, and trusted not in his Salvation Ps. 78: 22. and 106: 24.*

7. This appeareth too much by our upfitting and wearying, as to several duties, which such a day calleth for, and which faith in life & exercise would prompt unto, and qualifie for; such as *Submission* unto the Lords disposal; *Patience*, under his hand; *Prayer* for a right frame under the dispensation, and for an outgate in Gods due time; *Mortification* to the world, and to the enticeing vanities thereof; *Repentance* of the evils, that have provoked the Lord hereunto; *Zeal* for God, and his suffering Interests; mutual *Vpstirring* and encouraging in the Lord. Were Faith lively, these and the like would have an answerable liveliness and lustre.

8. The too great promptitude and readiness of minde and inclinableness of heart to hearken unto any offers made, that promise

mise rest and quietness, and have not with them too palpable, obvious and plaine repugnancy to former foundations, known principles and avowed practices, is another evidence of the decay of faith: Had *Moses's* faith been under such a decay, he would not have scrupled to be called the Son of *Pharaohs* Daughter; but would have thought it Wit and Policie, to have remained passive therein, and so kepted himself in case to have done some pieces of good service unto his brethren, the *Hebrews*: But we hear that by faith he refused to be so called, yea and choosed rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season *Heb. 11: 24, 25.*

These and other things of this nature may sufficiently evidence, how little there is of this Faith; and how rare the lively Actings thereof are, this day: And if we consider the evil of this evil, to wit, of the decay or not acting of Faith, at such a time, we will see cause for all the many and various distempers, that are upon our Spirits; for, according to our Faith, so is our Life, in a day of trouble: Whence we see, how hereby we prejudge ourselves of that excellent Life, that might be, and is had by Faith, in such a day; and of all the refreshing, comfortable and support-

ing fruits and effects of it, in the soul: and what these are, we will see by looking back to CHAP. III. where the Nature and Workings of this Life were spoken to.

And if any should enquire, whence this cometh, that there is so little of this Faith? we might assigne many causes thereof, such *to wit*, as are procuring causes of it, and introductive to it; but we shall only mention a few, which withall may help forward the conviction of the raritie of this grace in exercise, this day: As

I. Little real going out of ourselves, and renouncing our own Wit, Strength, Courage and Parts: This is both provoking to the Lord, to withdraw his influences, and is naturally introductive of this not beleev-
ing. When we lean to our own understanding, we cannot trust in the Lord; these two go together *Prov. 3: 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. and lean not to thine own understanding.* Faith carrieth the man out of himself; and is the result of a mans desparing of help and throwbearing in himself, and of his renouncing all that is his owne: So that where this is not thoroughly done; but there is still some looking after, trusting to and leaning upon something, that is within us, and that we can call ours, faith is not exercised to the
life;

life; but according to that hankering of heart after these things within us, there is a proportionable weakness in our Faith.

2. Too much depending upon, and looking after second Causes argueth too little faith, and provoketh God to give us up to follow our own way. It is true, we are not allowed to tempt the Lord, or to despise meanes; yet it is as true, that he alloweth us not to place all our confidence in them, yea, or so to use them, as to place any of our trust and confidence in them: Meanes are but meanes; and signifie nothing, where the Lord blesteth not, and therefore the Lord will not have us quite despond, and sinck through discouragement, when we have not our eyes filled with good and hopful meanes. Alas what can Second causes do without the First? And cannot the first & supream Cause do without them; if he will? When then our hearts go out after second causes and meanes, as it provoketh the Lord to anger; so it evidenceth little pure dependance upon God, to whom it is all one to save by many, or by few.

3. Little studying to get the heart impressed with the Nature and Attributes of God doth sinfully procure, and dispose to unbeleef; For were the truth of Gods being Unchangeable, Almighty, True and Faith

ful, deeply impressed in our hearts, it would be more easie for us to give credite to his word, and to beleieve in hope against hope: But the Wearing out of the impression of these glorious Attributes, both evidenceth a decay in faith, and causeth it. So that the root of this evil is real Atheisme.

4. This unbeleefe and decay in faith floweth also from the not studying nor considering the providential actings & appearances of God of old and of late; little seeing and observing of the hand of a faithful God in all that is done, and hath been wrought; little noticing of His wheel in the midst of all the wheels of men. As the not observing of this most remarkable thing argueth little Spiritual Wisdom, or Prudence *Hos. 14: vers. 9. Psal. 107. vers. 43.* So it causeth a great decay of Faith; Here is the nourishment, as it were, of faith; and when this is away, faith must become sick and weak.

5. This decay floweth also from and is occasioned by ignorance, and not studying of that eternal and everlasting ground of Confidence and Hope; *to wit*, the Covenant of Redemption, wherein all that either the Church, or any particular soul can stand in need of, is fully and for ever secured, upon all hands, and against all hazards:

hazards: Were this rock more in our view, our faith and confidence would be more firme.

6. This decay of faith floweth from little dwelling upon the Promises: Faith cannot live without the word of promise. It is upon the word of promise, that he causeth his people hope *Psal. 119: 49.* It is this word of his that quickeneth *vers. 50.* When the promises are out of sight, which are all Yea and Amen in Christ; faith cannot but lose its ground. The ancient Beleevers recorded *Heb. 11: 13.* that died in faith, though they did not receive the things promised, yet by faith they saw them a far off, in the promises; and seeing them in the promises, were perswaded of them, and embraced them; They rested upon the Promiser, and were perswaded all would be, according as he had promised: and thus they lived by faith.

7. As the nature of faith is to unite the soul unto Christ, and to God through Christ, and to make use of Christ, and of his fullness in all their straits and difficulties, and to cast all these cares and cumberances on him; so the little abideing in Christ, and improving of him, and the not going to God daily through Him, causeth a decay universal, and particularly in faith, as to other duties of the day. Except we abide

in Him, we cannot bring forth fruit *Iob. 15: vers. 4.*

Having thus laid down some particulars, whereby this evil is discovered to be among us, to the end, we may be both affected with it, and moved to wrestle against it, and to seek to be from under the power of it; let us consider the sinful evils that are in it, and see if it be not a sin of a more than ordinary deep dye: A few instances will suffice to evince this.

1. This is the maine duty, that is called for, in such a dark and dismal day, that the children of God should in a special manner act faith: Now should they beleeve or never: and if every thing be beautiful in its season, acting of pure faith in such a day, must have a special heavenly lustre and beautie in it; and the want of it, must be a most unseasonable want; and render the soul very deformed. Must it not then be an exceeding sinful thing to want Faith, and the peculiar actings of it, in the proper season? How unbandsome is it for a soldier to lay aside his shield, in the very day of battel, and to have it a seeking, when he is to rancountre the enemy? When should Seamen make use of their cables and of their anchors, if not in a storme? And who would sail or venture their goods with such

such Seamen , as would make no use of their rowes and anchors , in such a time, but leave the ship to the mercy of winde and wave ?

2. This grace of faith in exercise , is the proper badge and character of a childe of God, in such a day: They are beleevers; and what are beleevers, but such as beleeve and give credite to the Word of God. Now when they do not beleeve , in a time when they should most beleeve , how shall it appear , that they are beleevers? Wherefore, the not beleeving now , when beleeving is most requisite , must , upon the matter , be a renunceing of their Christianity ; and a professing of themselves to be no more Beleevers. And what an hainous iniquity this is , who seeth not.

3. The want of this grace in exercise , in such an evil time , doth unhinge , indispose , and unfit the soul for any other duty , requisite in that day ; and so must be a most dangerous and sinful evil. He , who laith aside his Faith , in that day , laith aside also his Repentance ; his Christian Patience ; Helmet of Hop ; his surable Submission ; his Dependance upon God , his Use making of the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God ; his Girdle of Truth ; and in a word , he laith aside his whole Armour , and all his
Christian

Christian Exercise; for he cannot pray aright; he cannot meditate on the works and word of God aright; he cannot read the word with profite; nor can he hear it preached with profite; all which is so manifest, that it needeth no confirmation; and doth clearly demonstrate the evil of this sin.

4. There is herein a great indignity done to God Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is hereby declared to be not worthy of credite, and that his truth faileth, and therefore his promises are not to be trusted to, like these *Psal.* 106: 24. Such, sure, cannot hope in his word, as *David* did *Psal.* 130: 5. Nor say, that his word is true; as he did *Psal.* 119: 160. The Lord Iesus is also hereby affronted; for not to beleieve now, is as much as to say, He hath not confirmed the Covenant; He hath not made a purchase of all these good things promised; He hath not gotten all power in heaven and in earth; He will not be faithful in his Administration; all the promises are not Yea and Amen in him; He is not the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; so that how deep this draweth, none can be ignorant. So likewise the Holy Ghost is hereby enjured; as if he were not the Holy Spirit of promise, nor the Spirit of Truth.

5. Such

5. Such as do not now beleeve, but give way to unbeleeve, sinne against the generation of the Children of God *Psal. 73:v. 15.* and so bring a reproach upon the Profession of Godliness and Christianity; and give ground to others to think, that it is no real thing, but a meer fancie, for a faire day to make a flourish withall, which may be laid aside in a winter stormie day. Is there a truth and reality in the promises; and is their real worth and excellency in the things promised? Why then, (might strangers say) are not these received, embraced, closed with & rested upon, in an evil day, when the faith of them were the only mean to support under pressures, and to carry thorow difficulties? Will any man think, that a strong cable can keep a shipe fast, in a storme, more then a weaker tow, when he seeth that sea men lay them by and cast all their Cables overboard, when a storme beginneth? Is it not then manifest, how great a reproach this bringeth upon Christianity?

6. Not to beleeve now, doth virtually and interpretatively overturne all Christian Religion; for when we beleeve not the promises, we say, they are not true: And if these be not true, where is our Religion? If one promise may be questioned and doubted

doubted of, all may fall under the same suspicion; and if all the promises be dubious, and all the Prophets be liars, where are we?

7. Yea, at length, if we follow this forth, it will and must land us at Atheisme: for if any of the promises of God be untrue; he is no more the God of Truth, and a God that cannot lie; and he who is not that, is not the true and living God.

By these few particulars, we may see, what great reason we have both to mourne, for the unbeliefe, that is to be found, in too great abundance, this day, when faith is especially called for: As also to garde against the growth or continuance hereof; and for this cause to be watching against those evils, that bring it on, which we lately mentioned; and especially to garde against

1. *Sinnes* that bring on a distance from Christ, the fountaine and spring of all our life and faith; that is, all grosse and *presumptuous sinnes*; and also other *sins unrepented of*; for these will piece and piece draw the soul away from God, and separat betwixt Him and us: And so long as we are at a distance from God, we shall never be in case to live the life of faith.

2. *Presumption or carnal Confidence*; for if
we

we trust to rotten reeds, they will fail us; Our knowledge of the truth or experiences, our supposed stock, our wit and understanding, and other things of that nature, will disappoint us, and break under us, if we lay too much weight upon them: We know the sad instance of *Peter*.

3. *Carnal security*; for hereby we tempt God, and put ourselves out of case to act faith, as a valiant Souldier. That watch word should still ring in our eares, *What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch*. If ever we Watch. we should Watch, when the Devil is roaring. and when our wals are besieged; and if we sleep then, we will not be in case to make use of our shield.

4. *Forgetfulness of God*, and of his *Word* and *Works* is another evil, that we should guard against, if we would beleeve: for if we lose these, we lose the Object of faith; and no Act can be without its Object, See *Psal. 78: 22, 42*.

5. *Consulting with flesh and bloud*, and construeing all things according to humane reason, and humane appearance, is an enemy to faith; so that where it is, faith is put to the door; for faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen *Heb. 11: 1*.

6. *Tempting*

6. *Tempting and limiting of the holy one of Israel*, is no friend to faith, as we see *Psal. 78: vers. 18, 22, 41.* compared together. This therefore would also be guarded against.

From what is said, it clearly followeth, That all, who desire to enjoy a life, in an evil time, should minde and set about this durie of Faith, whereby this life is had and keep-ed. We saw above, what influence faith had unto this life; and this necessity of it, in reference to life, when nothing else will contribute to life, in an evil time, if faith be wanting, is sufficient to enforce the endeavour after the studie and exercise of it, and that withall diligence, and haste. And if it be enquired? how this faith, that will be a meane to life in such a dismal day, shall be win at, I shall shortly propose these few particulars.

1. It is first of all necessary to this end, that the Man be united unto Jesus Christ by faith, and that the marriage be made up betwixt Christ and his Soul, that he may become reconciled unto the Lord; and so live the life of Justification through faith: for he must first be a just man, that is, one clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, before he can live this life; because it is the just that live this life: And till the
fir st

first and principal act of faith be done, there will be no acting of faith; Now the first and principal Act of Faith is this uniting Act; whereby whole Christ is received, as offered in the Gospel; The soul must have an interest in Christ, and be united with Him, and related to Him; before it can make any application to Him, or any improvement of Him, for any such end, as this is.

2. Care would be had to keep this Interest in Christ distinct and clear: I do not meane, that every sincere beleever will attaine unto this perswasion, or to clear evidences of his interest in Christ; nor do I meane, that none will be in case to live by faith, in a day of calamitie and tribulation, but such as have attained unto this Assurance: but my meaning is, that the more clear and distinct this interest be, it will be the better, in such a day; it will be more easie for such, as see their names written in the book of life, to venture on seen hazards, for the Testimonie of Jesus; than for such as have no light in that matter, but are walking in darkness, and are under doubts. I grant withall, that the Lord, for holy and wise Reasons, may carry a soul thorow temptations, in a day of trial, in a more cleanly manner, and with less disadvantage to the
cause

cause, or advantage to enemies, that never knew what assurance meant, nor did see its being in the light, by the light of the Lord; when he may leave another that hath attained unto an high measure of assurance, to step aside. Therefore.

3. All, who have in truth looked towards Christ, and are heartily satisfied with the termes of Salvation in Him, would be careful to live neer Jesus: for, as without Him, they can do nothing at any time; so far less will they be able to suffer, and to wade thorow a sea of great tribulation, without Him. They would then be careful to cast themselves in Christs armes daily, in the conviction of their own weakness; and as perswaded of an impossibility of riding - out the storme, without his help and grace; and without new and fresh supplies of influences for their throw-bearing.

4. Care would be used to keep from all God-provoking courses: We would beware to sinne the Lord away, when we have so much need of his help: A tender and circumspect watchful walk is very necessary, at such a time. Sinnes committed should not be lyen in, but carried away to the fountaine, in haste, that they may be washen away in the blood of the Lamb.

Especially

Especially care would be had against the beginnings of a Defection: It is not good too boldly to draw too nigh to the brink: It is best to fear alwayes, and to keep far off from yeeldings, or from what hath but an appearance of evil: a mint (as we say) unto a sinful compliance, in a day of Temptation, though but in a small measure, when done deliberately, may provoke the Lord more than a greater sin, at another time; as a wrong look in a childe, while the Father is correcting him, may be much more provoking, than at another time.

5. There is a waiting and hanging upon God by faith, that we may have faith, in such a day; a beleeving that we may beleeve: Christ being the Author and Finisher of faith, & the great Prince & giver thereof, he must be sought to by faith, for the gift of the exercise of faith, as at all times, so then especially.

6. It is necessary at such a time, to keep the impressions of God, His Nature and Attributes, fresh and green: To have our souls daily under the impressions of God, as Unchangable, Holy, True, Almighty, Just and Gracious, &c. that our souls may some way correspond with these, in a suitable and answerable frame. So long as the soul is kepted in this set and frame, it will
be

more able to stand in a stormie day, whereas when this impressiō is lost or worne off, the Soul is more ready to be carried about with every winde of Doctrine, and carried away with every winde of Temptation.

7. The Nature of the Covenant of Grace, and its ground and basis, the Covenant of Redemption, would be well studied; that thereby we may have a clear prospect of all the grand Resolutions and Determinations of Heaven; and a distinct view of the progresses and tendencies of all the Acts of the Providence of God, both more general in the world, and more special in the Church; and also discover the connexion betwixt all these passages, how heterogenious so ever they appear to men to be, yea & destructive unto the hoped issue, and the grand end intended, that is, the Glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in the final Salvation of the Redeemed Church, and Mystical Body of Christ, in all its parts and members. Hereby also we would be in case to see, how the promises are all sure in Christ, and principally made to Him, as Head: and how, upon many infallible grounds, they must and shall be all, in due time, accomplished, whatever improbabilities, yea and (to our sense) impossibilities, stand in the way.

8. We

8. We would remember, that others through grace have been helped to this life of Faith; and the same free grace remaineth: We have the same God to beleeve in; the same Mediator of the New Covenant, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen; the same Spirit of Life and Truth; the same Covenant; the same Promises.

9. There are many grounds of Hope, Comfort, Support, Patience, sweet Submission, Joy, Through-bearing, Peace, Courage, Siedfastness and the like, scattered through the whole Scriptures, in the Goodness and Wisdom of God; which we would do well to studie, and be acquainted with, and labour to improve to the ends designed: For these are as food to faith, in such a day; and the more faith eat and feed upon this provision of heaven, it will become the more fat and strong. And this leadeth me to what I intend further to handle; that is, to mention some of these many Grounds and Considerations, and to shew how they might be improvén, in an evil time, for the strengthening of faith, and helping to this life, in such a dead-like time; knowing how useful and necessarie it is to have our thoughts dwelling much upon them, to the end, we may come to know in experience; what it is to live by

faith, in such a time as this is, which is pointed to in the Text.

CHAP. VI.

CONSIDERATION 1.

*Gods presence with
his people in Aff-
lictions.*

IT cannot but be wearisome and irksome to a weak creature, to be wrestling under an heavie burthen, in a wilderness, where he hath no company, and can get no help; as it would be refreshing and comfortable to him, to have a second at hand, ready and willing to put to his hand, and to bear him company, though the load should be heavie. Crosses and Afflictions are no easie burthen for a weak back: Yet if the Believer saw by faith, that the Lord of Hosts, the Almighty God of Jacob, were at hand, and standing by him with his everlasting armes, this could not but make him glade and cheerful, in his saddest lot; for that, which often times casteth him down, while Afflictions are on his loines, is the
appre-

apprehension, that God is departed, and hath left him to wrestle with the burthen his alone. He cryeth out, He is gone, He is gone, and here am I alone. Now, if Gods presence were beleev'd and seen by faith, would not sad and heaveie Afflictions become light?

It will be then of some use to speak a little to this Consideration: Only we would premit these few things.

1. It seemeth good sometimes unto the Absolute and only Wise God, to exercise some of his owne beloved Children, both outwardly and inwardly at once; not only to lay heaveie Afflictions upon their bodies, but also to hide his face, and thereby afflict their Spirits: Thus we see it was with *Job*, and with others of the Lord's worthies, mentioned in Scripture.

2. Sometimes the Lord doth this in Justice, because of their Provocations: So it was with *David*, whom the Lord did outwardly afflict, for the matter of *Vrijah*, and withall upon the same account, he had many a sad and sharpe hour within, as we see *Psalms* 6. and 32. and 38. and 51. all penned upon this occasion, And this, I confess, is yet more grievous and afflicting.

3. Sometimes the Lord may be neer to

abeleever, in a time of sore outward Affliction, and yet be, as hid unto him; because through the Confusion, that his soul may be in, through the violence of the outward trouble, hurrying him, as it were, headlong, he is not in case to perceive it; like a childe under water, he may be saife from drowning because in the Fathers armes, and yet not see it. As the Psalmist Psal. 73. while he was violently carried away with the torrent of the temptation, and speaking like a man distracted, and out of his Christian wits; he saw not, that God was standing hard by him; till afterward that he came to his wits againe; then he saw, that even while he was more like a beast, than a godly Person, the Lord had him in his hand, *Vers. 22: 23. So foolish was I and ignorant, I was a beast before thee, nevertheless I was continually with thee (thou left me not one moment of time) thou hast bolden me by my right hand.*

4. Gods presence with his people, in their Affliction, is not alwayes after one and the same manner and measure: sometimes it is more clear, manifest and patent; sometimes more dark and hid. His presence with the three Children in the fiery furnace was most manifest and conspicuous; It is not so with all. He will be so present with some,
as

as to cause them triumph over all hardshipe, and to rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and with others so only as to carry them thorow, though with much fear, wrestling and sorrow.

5. It is usual with the Lord, when his people are suffering for his Cause, and for witnessing to his Truth, to communicate more of his sensible presence unto them, at some choke, for their support, and for the further vindication of the Truth, and encouragement of others to stand fast; so was it with *Daniel* and the three Children, and with the Apostles many times: And so hath it been with many Martyres in the very flames. *John* had his Revelations in *Patmos*, *Jeremiah* also had the Lord nigh unto him, with revelations of his mind, while he was in the dungeon, *Jer.* 37: 16, 17.

6. Even when God is provoked by peoples Transgressions to hide his face, and to send on double affliction; though he withdraw his comforting presence; yet he leaveth them not altogether; for he is still present to keep life in, otherwise the seed should perish, contrare to *I. Job. 3: vers. 9.* and they should finally and fully fall away, contrary to many grounds of Scripture.

These things premised, we say, That

the Children of God, in all their Afflictions outward or inward, especially in such, as are for the Testimony of Jesus, have ground to beleeve, that they shall enjoy the presence of God with them; and in the consideration of this, be comforted over all their sorrow, having their spirits stayed, in the midst of other distempers.

For unfolding of this comfortable Consideration, we shall 1. Evince the truth of it from Scripture, and shew the ground of faith for it. 2. Explicate in some measure the Nature of this Presence of God, at such a time. 3. Shew some of the Effects hereof, and 4. Pointe forth what improvement should be made thereof.

As to the first of these, We finde several promises both general and particular to this purpose 1 Sam. 12: 22. — *for the Lord will not forsake his people*: And if this hold good at all times, much more then, when his people are in a suffering condition for his sake Deut. 31: 6. *Moses saith unto the people, on the Lords behalfe, He will not leave thee, nor forsake thee*, There was a promise made to Jacob Gen. 28: 15. *and behold I am with thee, & will keep thee in all places — for I will not leave thee*. And the same is renewed unto Joshua Chap. 1: 5. *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*: And this all beleevers may apply

to themselves, in their own particular cases and exigences, as the Apostle teacheth us *Heb. 13: 5.* saying, *Be content with such things, as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* And so, as he would have these *Hebrews* making use of this promise, for their own particular necessitie; so he alloweth all the Children of God, to do the like, especially in a time of Affliction, when at no time they can stand more in need of the comfort of this, than when outward comforts are far removed. Moreover we have a promise of this, more particularly relating to an hour of affliction and tribulation *Eesai. 43: 2.* *When thou passest thorow the waters, I will be with thee, and thou shalt not overflow thee, when thou walkest thorow the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* So that, whatever be the Affliction of his people, represented here by two most terrible Masters, Fire and Water, he hath promised to be with them, in it; and so with them, as that they shall not be consumed thereby. The saddest of their Afflictions cannot banish God from them, nor intercept the beames of his glorious and loving countenance. So *Eesai. 41: 10.* *feare thou not for I am with thee.* He not only assur-
eth them of his Presence, but he would have

them also resting so perswaded of it, as that upon the account thereof, they might hush all feares to the door, We finde likewise clear instances hereof, in the Scriptures, as of *Daniel*, and of the *three Children* formerly mentioned *Dan* 3. and 6. But beside this, we finde some, in faith of this, resolving not to feare, even when wrestling with the King of terrours; as *David* *Psal.* 23: 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will feare no evil, for thou art with me.* So likewise the Church *Psal.* 46: 7, 11. twice over. *the Lord of hosts is with us*, and upon this ground resolved, not to feare, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea &c. See likewise *Psal.* 91: vers. 15. *2 Chron.* 32 v. 7. *Jerem.* 15: 20. and 30: 11. and 46: 28.

Secondly, As to the Nature of this Presence of God with his people, in a time of Affliction, These few things may serve to our purpose.

1. Sometimes, though most rarely, God is present, in a more extraordinary manner, miraculously defending them from the rage of their enemies: as he was present with the three Children, in the fiery furnace, *Dan* 3. so as the fire had no power over them, no not so much as to sing one haire of

of their garments; for there was a fourth with them in the furnace, and this fourth was like unto the Son of Man. In like manner was he present with *Daniel*, restraining the raging and rampant lions, that they could not once bite, or break one bone of *Daniel* Chap. 6.

2. Sometimes, though enemies may get their will, yet the Lord may be so present with his people in their Afflictions, that they may be as little troubled or commoved thereat, as if they felt no trouble at all; as he was with some Martyres, who, while in the flames, did not feel the force of the fire, nor had any more pain, than if they had been lying in a bed of downs.

3. Sometimes He will send in such a flood and shower of spiritual Joy and Consolation into their souls, as will make them sing with *Paul* and *Silas*, while their feet are fast, in the stocks *Act. 16.* and as it was with that Holy Martyr, who, all the time he was in prison, had no sensible presence, or manifestations, but when on his way to the place of execution, got such a discovery, as made him cry out to his fellow sufferer, *He is come, He is come:* and thus give them that Joy unspeakable and full of glory.

4. Oftentimes He is present by clearing
K 5; up

up the promises unto them, suiting that case. & their interest in these promises; and helping them to act faith thereupon, to their comfort and Joy in the Holy Ghost; so that they become resolute and steadfast; and withall may let them see clearly their interest in Him, and his relation to them, and so fill their mouths with a song, as seeing their names written in the Book of Life; and that all things work together for their good; and that nothing shall be able to separate them from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus *Rom. 8. vers. 28, 35, 38, 39.* Thus he comforteth some in all their tribulations *2 Corinb. 1: v. 4.* yea and maketh those Consolations to abound by Christ *vers. 5.*

5. As to some, though they may be in darkness as to their State, and feel no incomes of sensible Consolation and Joy; yet He may be with them giving peace and serenity of soul, as to their former walk, and the cause of their present sufferings; so as they may enjoy quietness of minde, and the testimony of a good Conscience; and this is a great feast, for our rejoicing is this (saith the Apostle *2 Cor. 1: 12.*) the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world &c.

6. Through

6. Though some may want all sensible incomes of Joy and Consolation; yet the Lord may be present with them; in an hid, unseen and unfelt way, as to any sensible appearances, keeping them in the Love of God, and in the Love of his Truth; and holding them by an unseen hand, that they will not, they dar not buy their freedom from trouble, by selling and denying the Truth of God. And this presence will be most sensible in its effects, which as to substance, will be the same with the effects, wrought by the more sensible manner of God's Presence, formerly mentioned.

Now as to these effects (which is the *Third* particular) of the Presence of God with his people, in the day of affliction and suffering; we shall mention a few, which will contribute to shew the great advantage, that is to be had hereby, in an evil day.

1. By his presence the Lord will *uphold* them in a day of distress, and keep them from being overcome or overthrown thereby; so as, though they be troubled on every side (as it is 2 Cor. 4: 8, 9.) yet not distressed; though perplexed, yet not in despair; though persecuted, yet not forsaken; though cast down, yet not destroyed

fear not (saith the Lord *Eesai. 41: 10.*) *for I am with thee: And what followeth upon that? I will strengthen thee; yea, I will helpe thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* So that, when the Lord is present with Beleevers, they want not strength and supporting grace. Thus was he present with *David Psal. 41: 12.* *And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integritie; and settest me before thy face for ever:* But how was this evinced? He mentioned the sweet effect thereof, *Vers. 11.* *By this I know, that thou savourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.* He had to do with persecuting Adversaries, who were rejoicing to hear of his sickness, wishing he were once dead, and his name made to perish; and in their secret whisperings were raising disadvantageous reports of him, yea and they had their secret Cabals, close Counsels to do him mischief, with whom conspired even his familiar and trust friend, as the foregoing-verses of the *Psalm* shew: Yet when his Intimat and Familiar Friend and Domestick forsook him, God did not forsake him, but upheld him, in his integritie, and set him before his face continually, that he might see, that none should harm him; and he found this fruit and effect of it, that he was made to stand against
all

all their force and manichations; they could not get all their will of him: The Lord did not suffer them to triumph over him. And at another time, when he was put to flee for his Life from *Saul*, into the wilderness of *Judab*, in the forest of *Hareth* 1 *Sam.* 22: 5. he found the same effect of this Divine presence *Psal.* 63: 8. (a *Psalm* penned at that occasion, as the Title cleareth) *thy right hand upholdeth me.* When Gods right hand holdeth his people by their right hand, as it is *Eesai.* 41: 13. they cannot but be helped. And this is one notable effect of his Presence with them, and his grace thus assisting is sufficient 2 *Cor.* 12: 9.

2. By his Presence he *strengtheneth* them, in the day of their Adversity; though they be oft like to faint, and fall under the burden, and have many an heavie groan and sigh, as if their very back were breaking with the load, and hence like to desponde through discouragement and fear, that one day or other they shall succumb and give it over; yet he manifesteth his presence in strengthening of them *Eesai.* 41: 10. and in making that word good *Eesai.* 40: 29. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength: And thus they renew their strength *vers.* 31. and by these new influences, which he can, in an insensible way, convey

in to the soul, they are made to endure the storme, with much Christian Patience and Fortitude. The primitive Sufferers found this, when they could endure with admirable patience to be sawn asunder, roasted on gride yrons, tormented in frying pans, whipped to death, racked on a wheel, to have have all their skinnne flaine off them, and to be brunt quick, and put to the most exquisite torments, their persecuters could devise. Was not this a wonderful effect of Gods presence with them, steeling their hearts, and strengthening them, that they endured all patiently, and would not accept of deliverance, upon any base or sinful termes? See *Heb. 11: v. 33*. And the Histories of after Persecutions do abundantly also confirme this. See *2 Tim. 4: v. 17*. *Never the less the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.*

3. His presence causeth them to avow and stand to the maintainance of the precious Truths of God, which are called in question, and for which they are put to suffer: That was a noble effect of the presence of God, with the three Children, that made them tell the King to his face, threatening them with the fiery furnace, made seven times hotter than ever, *Dan. 3: 18*. *Be it known to thee, O King, that we will not serve thy God,*

nor Worshipe the golden image, which thou hast set up. Nothing but the presence of God made the Martyres witness a good Confession to the Truth, in the midst of all the flames and torments they did meet with. Their bow abode in strength, and their hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, as being the kindly Sones or Successours of Joseph, of whom this was foretold Gen. 49: v. 22, 23.

4. His presence keeps them *sure and steadfast*, as to the maine business, of adhering to Christ by faith: and herein the Lord is counterworking the plots of Satan and defeating his counsels; whose chiefe designe is (as to them) to have their Faith shaken; for which end he sought to have winnowed Peter, but Christ prevented him, by praying that his faith should not fail. Then they finde that made good, which Paul asserteth with confidence Rom 8: 35, 37. The holy man Psal. 73. was sorely assaulted with a temptation, and was almost carried off his feet, and made to turne his back upon the way of God; but yet his root was fixed in the ground, and he was not blowne away: And what held him fast? He saith himselfe, when he is come through the water, ver. 23. *Nevertheless, I am continually with thee,*
thou

thou hast holden me by my right hand. And this did contribute to his more firme fixing, as to his faith and adherence; for he crieth out immediatly vers. 25, 26. Whom have I in heaven but thee; and none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

5. His presence maketh, that all the Afflictions, they meet with, sometimes doth not so much harme to them, as marre and impede their spiritual growth: As it doth not break off their interest, so nor can it sometimes so much as wrong their spiritual Condition and Frame; yea it is seen oftentimes, that as their State and Interest becometh more fixed, and manifest; so their Condition is much bettered thereby, their Heavenly mindedness, Deadness to the world, Spirituality of frame, Self denial &c. grow: Neither fire nor flame, waters nor rivers can part them and their graces: And all this is the effect of God's presence, taking away the venome and poison of these evils, and makeing them wholesome Medecines, and as fruitful shoures to the chapt ground, and as warme blinks of the sun to the cold earth, whereby it is made to send forth pleasant and profitable herbes. Hence saith the the Apostle *Rem, 5: 3, 4, 5. ————— we glory*

in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed. Satan thinks by the fire of tribulation, and manifold temptations, to consume the good metal. But Gods presence turneth it to be but a purging and trying fire; and this trial of faith worketh patience *Iam. 1: 2, 3, 4.*

6. His presence some times so preserveth them in their trials and troubles, that their very outward and temporal state and meannes is not thereby impaired; they suffer not so much as any loss or prejudice therein; **Whatever** their enemies may designe, and they may fear and apprehend. It was no small affliction for *Jacob*, to be forced, for fear of his Brother *Esau*, to flee out of his Fathers House and Native Countrey; and yet that same affliction did tend to enrich him outwardly; so that, though he went away having nothing but a bare staff in his hand, he returned having two bands *Gen. 32: vers. 10.* But what was the ground of all this? We have it *Gen 28: v. 15. and behold* (saith the Lord to him) *I am with thee, and will keep thee, in all places, whither thou goest.* Many of the Children of God have found this made good by experience; that when their enemies thought to have undone them, as to their outward state,

state, and as to their name and reputation, the Lord hath so been with them, that he hath made all the courses, which the enemies did take to ruine them, tend to the increase of their wealth, and to further and advance them, even as to honour and credite in a world: *Joseph* found this made good to him; and so did *Daniel*.

7. His Presence maketh up to them all their outward losses of Friends, Accommodations, Relations, and of what they enjoyed with some pleasure here, when that word is made good *Mat. 19: 29. And every one, that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Children, or Lands for my names sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherite everlasting life. So Luk. 18: 29, 30. Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house or parents — for the Kingdome of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more, in this present time. And as Mark hath it Chap. 10: 30. this hundred fold can even be with persecution.* Now all this gaine and advantage, all this hundred fold, which persecution cannot prejudice them of, cometh in at this door: His presence maketh them richer, then they would be, if they possessed an hundred times more then they did lose.

8. His

8. His Presence sometimes is such, as at length worketh out their actual delivery; after he hath supported them all the time of the trial, that they did not sinck under it. Thus was he present with Joseph, Daniel, and the three Children, and many others; thus did he promise at several times, to deliver Jeremiah Chap. 1: 8, 19. *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord ——— and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee? And why so? For I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.* So againe Ch. 15: 20: 21. *And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.*

9. His Presence so settleth and composeth their Spirits, that they are without that perturbation of mind, that proveth a great trouble; and are in case to go about duty without fear or anxiety: Whence it is that for all that enemies can do, they are kepted in a sweet Christian frame.

10. Yea, his Presence helpeth them to a joyful frame of Spirit, to a singing in their dungeon. It was the presence of the Lord
with

with the Apostles, that made them *rejoyce that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name* *Act. 5: 41.* & those, that Peter wrote to, *did greatly rejoyce* *1 Pet. 1: 6.*

Fourthly, In the last place, let us see, what improvement faith can and may make of this comfortable Consideration, to the end, the afflicted beleever may win to a life, in the midst of his affliction. And indeed Faith hath here noble advantage: For

I. Faith can hence inferre Conclusions, to free the soul of all base, discomposing and distracting fears, that ordinarily, in a time of trouble, seize upon the afflicted. *David*, when he had gotten a proof of Gods goodness before, and of his presence with him, and had now got his faith fixed, he husheth all feares to the door, and in a manner defyeth them *Psal. 27: 1. The Lord is my light and my Salvation, whom shall I feare? The Lord is the strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afrayed?* See also what followeth: as if he had said, come what Afflictions can come, I will not be afraid, for the Lord, as he hath been, so he will be, present with me, as a Light and as Salvation. So when *Jacob* heard, that *Esau* was coming to meet him with foure hundreth men, he was greatly afraid and distressed *Gen. 32.*

v. 6, 7. but after he had been at his prayers, the night following, and had a wrestling with one, the issue was *vers. 30.* *Jacob* called the name of the place *Peniel*; for (said he) *I have seen Gods face to face*: that was a wonderful blaink of Gods countenance: And what followed? *And my life is preserved*, said he, Which expression, as it may intimate his present sense of the mercy, and his heightning of it, in that he had gote such a Vision, and was not killed therewith; so it may hold forth his perswasion through faith, of his future deliverance: And thus through Gods presence in *Peniel*, he getteth some more confidence, and his fear is abated.

Upon several accounts fear and dread taketh hold of people, in time of Affliction; and as to all these, faith from this Consideration can prepare an antidote: As

(1.) When Affliction cometh, they apprehend and fear, their strength shall fail them, and they shall not come thorow the trial, nor be able to ride out the storme. But faith from this Consideration can dispel that cloud, and settle the soul upon this ground. Be it so, that thy strength is weak; yet thy Second is mighty, there is the Almighty God standing at thy right hand; and what hast thou to feare then? He can bear thee

thee, and thy burthen both, if everlasting armes be under, what burthen can crush thee? Will He stand by, and see thee sinck under the load? He is with thee, who alone is thy strength; and He is able enough to make thee stand.

(2.) They are afraid, that the trouble shall prove a growing trouble, and shall not end, in haste, but be like a feeding growing storme, and so prove the longer the more insuperable; and consequently insupportable. But faith, from this Consideration of Gods presence, can fix the heart against that fear; and cause the soul sing and say, if God be with me, it is no matter how long the trouble continue; let it grow as it will, his presence will prevent all danger, and countervail all dammage, and preserve me from hurt.

(3.) They are afraid, they shall not get new and fresh supplies from heaven, according as their necessity requireth; whereby it will come to passe, that at length they shall faint and succumb. But faith, improving this Consideration, rationally secureth them, as to this; Where God is present, there is strength enough. *He strengtheneth with strength in the soul*; his presence hath all strength necessary with it. He is present that everlasting armes may be under; if the
Sun

Sun be arisen in our Horizon, there will be influences of light and warmth, flowing therefrom. This fear then will not trouble the soul, that hath the faith of this truth: Such will be in case to say, though *I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will feare no evil, for thou art with me* Psal. 23.

(4.) They are afraid, that Enemies shall prevail at length, and they shall lose courage and faint; and so the enemies shall rejoice and triumph. But a fight of this by faith, will make them say with *Jeremie Chap. 20: v. 11. But the Lord is with me, as a mighty terrible one; therefore my persecuters shall stumble; and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.*

(5.) They are afraid that God shall not be well pleased with their Persons; and so their sufferings shall not advantage their souls welfare: But when faith improveth this promise, the beleever may conclude with himself, that his person is, and shall be accepted, and that it shall go well with him for ever; for were he none of God's, he would get none of his special presence. The Lord is only present with his owne, that He may carry them thorow all dangers and difficulties, and lande them saife above.

6. They

6. They are afraid, that they shall miscarry in their sufferings, some way or other, and so dishonour the Lord, and offend the generation of Gods Children, and wronge the cause. But the sight of this by faith scattereth this cloud of fear; for where the presence of the Lord is there are his Light and his Truth, two sure guides, to lead them *Psal. 43: v. 3.* He is a light and will be their light *Psal. 27: 1.* and in his light, they will see light *Psal. 36: 9.* His Countenance hath a light with it, and a light wherein they may walk *Psal. 89: v. 15.* and by this light, as they may get a sight of their interest in Christ; so they may see their present dutie, and get strength thereby to do their duty; for his presence hath strength with it.

Thus we see, the improving by faith of the promised presence of God, would have this noble advantage & effect, that it would free the beleever of those disquieting and distempering feares, to which they are obnoxious, in an evil day. Yea from this Consideration, the Lord presseth his people to lay aside all base, unworthie, slavish and carnal fear: as we see *Eesai. 41: 10, 13.* *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed &c.* two expressions to the same purpose, showing that the right improvement of this promise would and should banish away

away all sorts, and hurtful degrees of this evil of fear. Yea we see *vers.* 13. That Gods presence with his people, upholding them with his mighty power, hath a voice with it, saying, *fear not.* So againe *Chap.* 43: 1, 2.

2. Faith can improve this Consideration, for supporting the Soul, and keeping it from sincking under the burden, through discouragment and despondency of Spirit: For faith can reason thus. Is it not a shame for such, as have such royal, such necessary and such useful company, to be heartless in a day of Adversitie? It is true, as we said above, the Lord may be present with life and supporting strength, and yet so hide himself, as the beleever shall not be sensible of his presence, nor feel it, in such a manner or measure, as he faine would: Yet the beleever is called to act faith on this promise, though sense be not satisfied, and by faith draw encouragement from this Consideration, for his establishment, and against sense beleeeve; and thence he may chide himself for, and shame himself from his discouragment; and say to his Soul, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul: and why art thou discouraged within me?* Have I not excellent company with me, while I am here in a strange and solitary place,

L in

in a prison, in a founace of Affliction?
Have I not the Son of God with me?

3. The Consideration and faith of this Truth, that God is with his people in their trials, should animate and encourage them unto dutie, even when they see, that hazard and inconveniences attend the faithful discharge of such a duty: for the presence of God is enough to strengthen a man against all Opposition, and to carry him through all dangers, difficulties, and hardships, that can follow him, in the following of duty. What dammage can make them losers, who enjoy the presence of God? When *Jacob* was going down to *Egypt*, to his Son *Joseph*, he could not but apprehend both dangers and inconveniences, in the way: But when the Lord appeared to Him, and made him this promise *Gen. 46: 4*. — *I will go down with thee*, all vanished. *Moses* saw many difficulties and dangers, that he was to meet with, in going in to *Pharaoh*, to seek liberty for the People of *Israel*: But this was an antidote against all *Exod. 3: 12*. --- *certainly I will be with thee*. *Jeremiah* was put upon a piece of hard service, when he was ordained to be a Prophet to the Nations; and he could not but apprehend much danger, in the discharge of that Office: But the Lord giveth him this, to fortifie

tifie him against all *Jerem. 1: vers. 8. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee.*

4. The faith of this would certainly helpe us to walk under the Cross rejoicingly; and would prove a wellspring of Consolation to us. If the Lord of hosts be with us, why may we not rejoyce, though the earth should be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea? May not this be as a river, whose streames shall make glade the City of God? Should not the faith of this so sweeten all their lot, as their outward carriage may shew forth the inward Joy and Gladness of their heart? *I have set the Lord, alwayes before me: because he is at my right hand (said David Psal. 16: .) I shall not be moved: and what then? Therefore (vers. 9-) my heart is glade, and my glory rejoiceth, &c.*

5. The faith of this would strengthen our Hope and Confidence, that we should be no losers by the Affliction, this being one end of his presence with his people in their trials and distresses, *to wit*, that they may be kepted harmless, and unhurt by all that befall them. And seing it is so, that we have the promise of his presence, & thereby ground of Assurance, that all shall be well, why are we not more quieted in

our own minds, and rest not more in hope, that all shall turn about to the best, even when the day is at the darkest, and all look most dismal?

6. The Consideration of this sweet and refreshing truth, that the Lord is with us standing by us, in our Afflictions and Trials, should move us unto an holy, watchful, and tender walk in our sufferings; lest the holy God, who is looking on, be provoked to anger by our miscarriages, and to withdraw his gracious presence, and leave us to ourselves. When the holy One of Israel is standing by us, and looking on us, and taking notice of all our deportment, how careful should we be, that we stir not up his anger and Jealousie against us, by our wearying, quarrelling, fretting, hearkening to sinful motions, or using undue means for our outgate: For then we provoke him to leave us alone: and wo unto us, when we are alone, in such a day.

7. The Consideration of this should ease our mindes, and free us of many perplexing thoughts and cares, that may, at such a time, thronge-in upon us; as what shall we answer, when such or such intangling questions are proposed to us? What shall we do, when such a difficulty ranountereth us? How shall we carry, when under
such

such a temptation? For hereby we may have a satisfying answer to all these. Why? The Lord is with us, and we have no more to do; but to cast all our care on him, and to roll all these difficulties on him, according to that command 1 Pet. 5: 7. *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*: And if he care for us, he loveth to have us easing ourselves of our loads, and giving him a lift; yea the more we roll upon him, the better: He will take it best, if we roll the whole upon him. Thus should we commit our way unto the Lord Psal. 73: 5. and cast our burden upon him Psal. 55: 22. and he will take it as a gift; for so the word importeth. And shall he stand by us, waiting for a gift from us, and for such a gift, that would be so easing unto ourselves; and shall he not have it?

8. The Faith of this Presence of God with us, in Affliction, would free us of that disquieting thought, that proveth most troublesome and provoking, *to wit*: That the Lord considereth not, taketh no notice of, and weigheth not, our Affliction, and that *our way is hid from the Lord*, Esai. 40: 27. for then we would be far from having such thoughts; He, whom we look upon as present with us, in all our Afflictions, could not be thought to be a stranger to our

sufferings. We might then see ground of assurance and perswasion, that he were acquainted with every circumstance and ingredient, in our trouble and with every instrument and measure of it: And this would quiet and compose our Spirits, knowing that he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able; nor lay more upon us, than he knoweth, we are able to stand under.

9. The faith of this would give ground of hope of an outgate, in his good time. It is said of Zion Psal. 46: 5. *God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved*: And what then? What will become of her, when she cometh into trouble? *God shall help her, and that right early.* So Zeph. 3: 17. *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save.* Deliverance is a kindly native fruit and effect of Gods Presence with his people, in the time of their affliction. Pau. found this in his experience, when he was sifted before Nero, *Nevertheless the Lord stood with me* (2 Tim. 4: 17.) And what followed upon that? *And I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion.* This is fully confirmed Jerem. 30: vers. 10, 11. and 46: 28, 29. *Therefore feare thou not, O my Servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: For Lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the Land of*

of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid: For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee.

10. Lastly, from this Consideration, faith may saifly inferre, that the Church, and every true beleever, as parts and members thereof, shall be freed from ruine and destruction. The Lords Presence with them doth compleetly secure them, as to this. So that whatever the thoughts of their own weakness, instability, and fearfulness; or the Consideration of their enemies rage, barbarity, cruelty, or craftiness and wiles, may seem to say, or give ground to feare; yet his presence will make all saife; the end shall be Salvation; *for he will not make a full end of them, but correct in measure; as we see in the forecited Passages, Jer. 30: 11 and 46 29*

CHAP. VII.

CONSIDERATION II.

Christ's Sympathie with his people, in their Afflictions.

ITis no small ease to an hurt or wounded childe, when the mother taketh him up in her lap; and cryeth, *woes me for my hurt childe*, and bloweth upon the sore: this is half healing to the poor Childe. It must likewise be a great ease and refreshment, to an afflicted & persecuted Child of God, to know, that tender hearted Christ is sympathizing with him, in his sufferings, and is, as it were, taking him up in his armes, and putting him in his bosome, and saying, *woes me for my dear Childe! who hath hurt you?* and thus making as heavy a moane as he himself can do, and weeping to hear him cry; and sighing to hear him groan. The Consideration therefore of this particular cannot but be refreshing and strengthening unto the afflicted and persecuted Child of God; and be good cheer for faith to feed upon in order to a life, in a day of deep distress.

That

That we may in some measure make this plaine. We shall 1. Confirm the truth of this; that Christ is Sympathizing with his people, in their Afflictions. 2. Shew some grounds of this Sympathie. 3. Take notice of some properties of it. 4. Mentione some effects of it. And 5. Pointe forth some wayes, how it may be improv'd to good advantage.

As to the First, The truth of this is clear from these Passages of Scripture. (1.) *Esai. 63 v. 9. In all their Afflictions, he was afflicted.* Who is this He, who was afflicted with them, in all their Afflictions? Even He, who *vers. 3.* is said to have trode the wine-press his alone. (2.) *Judg. 10: v. 16. — His soul was grieved for the miserie of Israel.* This must be a remarkable thing, that Gods soul should be said to be thus grieved, shortned or straitned for his peoples misery: and certainly it speaketh out great pity and compassion, and a strong Sympathie, and is like the Sympathie of a tender hearted Mother, whose heart is bleeding and breaking for grieve, at the paines & sores of her tender and dearly beloved Child. (3.) *Zach. 2: 8. for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.* Is there any member of a mans body more tender, than the apple of the eye, that cannot en-

dure the left mote or dust? But how will a man be affected, moved and pained, when that is touched or wounded? Must not then this Sympathy be real, when every touch they meet with, at the hands of enemies, floundeth and affecteth Christ, as really as a man would be affected, if any thing touched his eye, yea the apple of his eye? (4.) *Act. 9: v. 4* *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* A wonderful expression? Whom was Saul then persecuting? Whom but the Disciples of Christ; and this Christ accounteth a persecuting of himself; as if he had felt every blow, every whipe, every injurie, they were put to suffer. (5) The mention we finde made of the *Bowels* of God towards his people, will speak out this Compassion and Sympathie *Eesai. 63: 15* ——— *Where is thy Zeal, and thy strength, and the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me?* *Psal. 25: v. 6* *Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, or thy Bowels, as it is in the Original.* *So Jer. 31: 20.* ——— *therefore my bowels are troubled for him;* spoken by the Lord of Penitent Ephraim. It is true, this word includeth also *Pitie*; but that doth contribute to cleare the truth of what is now under Consideration.

As to the Second Particular, The grounds of this Sympathie; we shall mention

tion some few, whereby we may be helped to know something of the Nature thereof:

As

1. As Christ is God, and so intimately acquainted with and privie to all the Miseries and Afflictions of his people, seeing nothing can be hid from him, not an evil word spoken against his people; nay nor a thought, device or purpose of evil against them, can be concealed from Him, who understandeth the thoughts afar off Ps. 139. v. 2, 3, 4. So he is true Man; having a true humane Nature; for he was made like unto us in all things, except sin; and so must have a natural kindly touch and feeling of the evils, we suffer; as one man hath of the evils, which another man suffereth, more than an Angel can have, or a man can have of the sufferings of a beast; for these are not of the same kind and nature. Now it is said of Christ, that he took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham Heb. 2: 16. and againe, in all things, he was made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful high Priest v. 17. and then followeth vers 18. for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succure them, that are tempted. So Chap. 4: 15. for we have not an High Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but

was in a'l points tempted, like as we are, without sin. By vertue of his true humane Nature, he hath a kindly, and natural feeling of our miseries, as one man will have of the Miseries of another.

2. Yet further, He is a man, that was experimentally acquainted with our griefs and sorrowes; and this is a futher ground of Sympathie; as a man, who hath known in experience and felt the paines of the gout or stonnie gravel, hath a more kindly Sympathie with another man, under these paines and torments; than another can have, who never did feel these paines. Now, our Lord Jesus was a *man of sorrowes and acquainted with griefe Esai. 53: 3.* He knew what it was to be cold, hungrie, thirstie, wearie, and what it was to be buffeted, spit upon, beat, wounded, slandered, called a glutton and winebiber, a traitour, to be cast in prison, impanneled before unrighteous judges, to be accused, falsely condemned, and to be put to death: and upon this account, he is the more able to Sympathize with such, as are put to suffer such things; for he was made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful high Priest *Heb. 2: 17.* And he was made like unto his Brethren, in that he *suffered vers. 18.* and upon the account of his suffering, being tempted,

tempted, he is said to be able to succour those who are tempted: And yet sure, he was able before; but not in such a special Sympathizing manner: He had hereby, as to this special manner, a new aptitude and ability. He was in all things tempted like as we are, and therefore can in a special manner be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having had an experimental knowledge and acquaintance with our infirmities and temptations.

3. We would consider how neerly he is related to us; and this will helpe us to see a further ground of this Sympathie.

(1.) He is our Brother Heb. 2: 11, 12, 14. *For both he who-sanctified, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren: Saying, I will declare thy name unto my Brethren ——— for as much then, as the Children are partakers of flesh and bloud, he also himself likewise took part of the same.* Now, a Brother can sympathize more kindly with another Brother in Adversitie, than a stranger can do. Men of one Nation will more kindly and warmly joyn with other, and take part with other, when wronged by any in a strange place, than men of different Nations will.

(2.) He is our King: and a Native King, that is tender-hearted and kindly, will be

much more affected with the miseries of his Subjects, than with the miseries and sufferings of those of another Nation, to whom he hath not that relation: They are his Subjects, and therefore their sufferings affect and pierce him more; as we see in *David*, when he saw the sword of the Lord drawn forth against them, *1 Chron. 21: 17*. As for those sheep (said he) what have they done? Let thine hand be upon me.

(3.) He is our *High Priest*: and the High Priest by Office was to be a Sympathizer with the People, whom he was to represent, and for whom he was to appear before God, for he was to carry their sins with him, in before the Lord: He was ordained for men, in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity *Heb. 5: v. 1, 2*. And therefore Christ the great High Priest, and the High Priest of our Profession, *Heb. 3: 1.* and *4: 14.* is not one that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities *Heb. 4: 15.*

(4.) He is our *Husband*, which further cleareth up and confirmeth the Sympathie: for a loving, kind, and tender-hearted husband, cannot but be piercingly affected with the Paines, Dolors, Grieves and Miseries,

series, that he knoweth his Wife to be under; her groanes cannot but go thorow his heart. Now Christ is the Churches Husband, and she his Spous; and therefore her miseries must go neer his heart. Men should love their Wives, as their own Bodies, he that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it; even as the Lord the Church: for this cause shall a man leave his Father and Mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh *Ephes. 5: 29, 30, 31.*

(5.) He is our Head, and is so called in that *Ephes. 5.* cited, and elsewhere: now every one knoweth, that the Head cannot but Sympathize with the least member of the body, that is suffering, were it but a finger or a toe. The paine of the least member of the body affecteth both heart and head.

(6.) He is the *Captain of our Salvation*, *Heb. 2: 10.* Which also speaketh out this Sympathie; seing we know, Captains and Officers use to take enjuries, and affronts done to their Souldiers, as done to themselves, and cannot but resent the wrongs they suffer.

(7.) He is our *Lord Redemer*, who hath redeemed the Church with his own blood:
for

For she is not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish, and without spot 1 Pet. 2: 18, 19. Act. 20 28. And sure a Ransomer, who hath purchased any Persons to himself, at such a rate, will be most tender of them; and will not take it well, that any wrong them; yea he will have another touch of griefe and inward sorrow, at their sufferings, than others can have; because of his interest in them, and relation to them.

Christ then being our Lord Redeemer, Captain of Salvation, High Priest, King, Brother, Husband and Head, can not but have a strong sympathy, with his suffering Relations and Members. He is neer of kin to them, of their flesh and bones, and then hath withall an experimental knowledge and feeling of these evils himself, in his own true body of flesh and blood.

4. The more to cleare and confirme this Sympathie, we would consider the neer and close union, that is betwixt Christ and his people. Many similitudes are used in Scripture to point this forth; but yet it must be acknowledged that they come all far short in expressing the closeness of this Union: He is one with them: as a King or
Head

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. 257

Head of a Commonwealth is one Politically with the Politick-body ; or the Head of a Familie, one with the Oeconomick Body. He is one with them, as the Husband is one with the Wife, in a marriage union ; so that, as Man and Wife become one flesh ; so Christ and beleivers become one Spirit : He is one with them as the natural Head is one with the natural Body, or as the Vine tree is one with the branches, *Joh. 15.* But all these put together in one cannot sufficiently expresse, and make us understand the close union, that is betwixt Christ and beleivers : The Scripture tells us of their being mutually in other. They dwell in other, he in them, and they in him *Joh. 6: v. 56, 1 Joh. 3: 24. and 4: 13, 16.* They abide in other, He in them, and they in him *Joh. 15: v. 5.* This then must be the ground of a wonderful Sympathie : When two are so neer to other, that they are in one another, can the one be hurt, and the other not smart and suffer ? As there is nothing in Nature, that can represent this mutual in-being to the life ; so there can be no Sympathie, that is founded upon Union, in nature, that can resemble this, and clearly represent it.

5. If we should adde to these grounds this Consideration, That their sufferings were

were upon his account, the Sympathie could not but be more manifest, and clear: for if one should be put to suffer, upon the account of another, the other could not but resent it, and have a Sympathie with the sufferer, even though he were a stranger; much more, if he were related to him, his acquaintance, his intimate friend, his brother; and yet more, the man would Sympathize with his wife, if she were under hard sufferings for his sake, and for fidelity and love to him. And may we not have ground to suppose, yea and to rest perswaded, that Christ must be in another manner affected, and must in another manner Sympathize with his neer and dear Relations, when they are put to suffer hard things, upon his account, and for their Love and Faithfulness to Him, and His Cause and Interest? Sure we may.

As to the *Third Particular*, which falleth next under Consideration, *to wit*, the *Properties* of this Sympathy; we shall satisfy ourselves with mentioning a few.

1. This Sympathie is *real*: It is not a meer imaginary thing, or a fiction, but a reality, producing real effects; such as the yearning of inward Bowels, Pity and Compassion, and a desire of delivering such, towards whom

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. 259

this Sympathie is exercised, out of the sad and suffering condition, wherein they are, *Eesai. 53: 9. In all their Afflictions he was afflicted.* But was this nothing else than a painted fire, having no heat with it? See what followeth, *In his love, and in his pitie, he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them, all the dayes of old.* This real Sympathy is accompanied with real moving of bowels, Compassion, Love, Tenderneſs, and a Desire, yea and Endeavour after their deliverance. So that

2. This Sympathy is *Practical*, pouſing to actual appearances, in the behalfe of ſuch as are in miſerie: It is not a meer ſpeculative thing, lying in the head; but it is a preſſure and weight upon the heart, paining it, until the party Sympathized with be at freedom.

3. This Sympathie of Christs is *Holy and Sinleſſ*, without that mud of corruption, that is in our ſympathie here below: Ours, by reaſon of this corruption, can miſcarry, and degenerat, and may ſo tranſport us, as we may do more harme than good: But his is pure, unmixt, limpid, without all dregs at the bottome, and ſo beyond all hazard of miſcarrying, in its actings and movngs: This ſure is comfortable:

4. This .

4. This Sympathie is accompanied with *Wisdom*; not like unto the fond and foolish Affections and Bowels of Women, that oft do overdrive and pousse to courses, that prove rather hurtful, than advantageous to the Person Sympathized with. This giveth great securitie, that his Sympathie will do no harme.

5. It is a *Kindly* Sympathy, it floweth naturally and natively, as from the Head, and from the Husband: The Womans Sympathie with her childe in hazard, is no forced, constrained thing; but is a natural, and sweet, kindly working of bowels; as the Mother of the Child had a kindly yerning of bowels to her Child, when *Solomon* spoke of dividing it with the sword.

6. It is a *Lasting* Sympathie, and *Unchangeable*, as being the Sympathie of one, who is the unchangeable God: our Sympathie, as our Affection, can coole and weare out, as spent and exhausted; but it is not so with the Sympathie of our Lord Jesus: As whom he loveth, he loveth to the end; so with whomsoever he Sympathizeth, with these he Sympathizeth to the end. The Mother cannot but continually Sympathize with the pained Childe, howbeit the Childe, should carry sometimes very unchilde-like;

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. 261

so Christs Sympathie doth not alter, howbeit his Children sometimes miscarry, and provoke him to anger. *He bare them and carried them all the dayes of old Esai. 63: 9*
O! How refreshing is this?

7. It is an *Univerſal* Sympathie; not in one or two diſtreſſes and dangers; but in all the Afflictions of his People; as that forecited paſſage *Esai. 63: 9.* cleareth: Yea he Sympathizeth with his people, in their Afflictions, whether they be ſenſible of them themſelves, or not: As a Mother can never ſee her beloved Child in hazard, but her bowels muſt yerne, even though the Child be apprehenſive of no danger at all.

8. This Sympathy is *Strong*; it cannot be extinguished; though a Childe hath grievouſly provoked his mother to anger, yet ſhe cannot but have yerning of bowels and Sympathie, when he falleth in the fire, or in the water, and is almoſt deſtroyed: Nay when the Childs folly hath ſo grieved her, that ſhe could not but whip him ſore; yet ſhe cannot but be moved at & affected with his paine: So albeit beleeviers have provoked God to ſend ſore Affliction on their loines; yet he Sympathizeth with them in the ſufferings, which their own follie hath brought upon them: As he was afflicted in all the Afflictions
of

of his people in the wilderness, though they vexed his holy Spirit. Is Ephraim (saith the Lord Jer. 31: 20.) my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled (or swoon) for him. That is wonderful, which we have Hof. 11: 7. 8. And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the Most High; none at all would exalt Him. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

9. This Sympathy is Divine, and Heavenly, being the Sympathie of one, who is God; and therefore inexpressibly and inconceivably beyond what we can apprehend: the greatestt expression of Sympathie, that ever was given by one man to another, by the most tender hearted Mother towards her tender and tenderly beloved Childe, is nothing able to give us the true impression, and lively apprehension of this Sympathy of Christs.

10. It is a Sympathie, that is accompanied with an Almighty arme of Power, to rescue the Person Sympathized with: Mothers bowels may yerne and move, till they break

break againe, and yet they cannot help their poor child drowning in the water; something may make it impossible for them to give any help. But the Sympathie of our God and King is accompanied with irresistable Power; a Power to which nothing is impossible. O! How comfortable is this unto his poor people? And what a Jubilee may this raise in their soul, be their outward condition what it will?

As concerning the *Fourth* Particular, which is briefly to be touched, *to wit*: The Effects of this Sympathie: We need only mentione a few, which may serve to make it appear, what good faith may finde in this Consideration, for a Life, in time of Affliction and Distress,

I. This Sympathie, as it saith, that Christ is affected with the Condition of his suffering friends and followers, as they are themselves; so it saith, that as they are earnestly desirous of reliefe and deliverance out of their trouble; so is He: But yet we must conceive aright of this, and construe all this to be in a way sutable to his now glorified state, and as free of those muddy Passions and Perturbations of mind, that we are subject unto. Our sympathie would prompt us to act unwisely; but though Christs Sympathy be real and strong; yet it is wise also; and

and therefore though he desire the delivery of his people; yet it is only in his own way, & in a way, that will be most for Gods Glory, and for their good. Though the wise tender hearted Mother Sympathize with the pained Child, and faine would have the Child freed of paine; yet not in such a way, as may put his life in hazard.

2. This Sympathie prompteth the Lord Jesus (if we might speak so) to set about the way, and meanes of his peoples delivery out of trouble, when it is for his ownglory, and for their real good. As in all their Afflictions of old he was Afflicted; so the Angel of his presence saved them; and in his pitie he redeemed them. and bare them, and carried them: Love and pity set Him (to speak so) on work, to through their deliverance, in his own way, and time; who knoweth best when to deliver, and what way to deliver his people.

3. This Sympathie engageth Christ to take their part against Enemies, and account the wrongs done to them to be done himself; and to state himself against them, as their adversarie, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* So *Zech. 2: 8.* *For t us saith the Lord of Hosts, after the glory, hath he sent me unto the Nations, which spoiled you: That is, after I have been Authorized and Commissionated to*

ed to punish , at his direction , his own people , who are most dear to him , and his Glory ; then he sent me unto the Nations , who were enemies unto his people , to take vengeance on them. And why so ? for (as it is added) *he that toucheth you , toucheth the Apple of his eye* : As if he had said , the Lord taketh all the wrongs , that are done to you , as done to himself : Nay , if the Enemy did but touch you , or spang his fingers end on you (as we say) it struck a knell to his heart , as if they had struck at the apple of his eye.

4. This Sympathie causeth Christ (as we would say) intertain good thoughts of them ; promise faire , in their name ; as a tender mother , when she seeth her childe sore whipped for his faults , when her bowels begin to move , she cryeth out , *O my childe will never do it againe*. Thus we finde the Lord promising faire in their name , *Esa. 63: ver. 8. For he said , surely , they are my people , children that will not lie* ; and what followed ? *and so he was their Saviour*.

5. This sympathie setteth Christ on work , to intercede for his people , at the fathers hand *Zach. 1: 12. Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said ; O Lord of hosts , how long wilt thou not have mercy on Ierusalem , and on the cities of Iudah , against which thou hast had indignation , those Threescore and Ten years :*

M

And

And whence did this flow? see vers. 14, 15. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zealousie: and I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the Affliction.

6. This same last passage sheweth, that this Sympathy will have this effect, that in the day that Christ contendeth against the enemies of his people, dear will they pay for all the wrongs they have done to them; they shall be called to an account for all: and though the Lord, in His holy Justice and displeasure, did make use of them, as a rod to whipe his children with all; yet they shall be made to account, as going beyond their Commission; as helping forward the Affliction: No that they could do any thing beyond what the Lord gave a providential Commission unto, or did suffer, and wisely order; but this is spoken after the manner of men; as if when a Father were angrie with his Child, he should say to a servant *him thrust out of doors*, yet he should take it ill to see that servant misusing the Child, and dealing too roughly with him, out of a spirit of revenge.

7. This Sympathy hath another effect, that many faults are past by: Christ will worke their delivery, though there be many Provocations standing in the way: Christ,
out

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. - 267

out of Love and Sympathie, will bear with many of these; When the people, in whose Afflictions he was Afflicted *Esa. 63: 9. rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, Vers. 10.* What did he? Did he give them up? No, but he remembered the dayes of old, and so did he lead his people, to make himself a glorious name *Vers. 14.*

It cannot but be strange, that this should be so; and yet his people should carry, in their Distress and Affliction, as if there were no such thing. Alas! The truth is, this is not beleev'd, it is not seen nor considered by faith. It is a notable well of Consolation, but though it be at hand, *Hagar*-like they know it not, they see it not; sorrow oftentimes so overwhelmeth them, that they can not look to this, and suck comfort from it; as they might do, and are allowed to do: If it be enquired, how should, or may this be improved?

The Answer is the *Last* Particular, which we purposed to speak to, that is, to point out a few particulars, how faith can get a life sucked out of this Consideration, That Christ is suffering and Sympathizing with the Children of God, in all their Afflictions; and especially in such, as are for his sake, and for their adherence to Him and to his Truth, in the worst of their suffer-

ng lot, and to this end, I shall name those.

1. The beleeving of this truth would serve much to ease the soul of the heaue burthen that lyeth on, As it is a double load to a poor creature, to be under some heaue burthen, and to know of none, that is taking a lift with it of the burden, were it but by speaking tenderly and Sympathizingly to it and of it, and bemoaning its condition, bewailing and lamenting it. So it giveth some ease and reliefe to such an one to finde any Sympathizing with him, condoling and lamenting his Condition, and softning his paine, and doloure with a soft word, expressing Compassion, and a suffering with him. And will it not give ease to a poor beleever to see this, and know it by faith, That Christ, the great and exalted King, Prince of the Kings of the Earth, is taking notice of him in his sufferings, louting down to take a share of his lot, and a lift at his burden; yea that he carrieth a Brothers heart, more tender than the heart of any Mother, bleeding at his miseries, pained and pierced with his Afflictions; yerning and moving with wonderful and inconceivable tenderness? What will ease and support a Beleever, wrestling under heavy pressures, if the faith of this do it not? Glorified Jesus,

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. 269

sus, though now exalted in Highest Glory, is as really Sympathizing with him, and affected with his paines and sufferings, as his owne Head or Heart is, when his hand or foot is pained; or as he himself findeth himself to be, when his dear Wife, and tender Childe are in heart-breaking paine and torment? Do the cries of his tormented Child or Wife paine, and pierce his very heart; and when he hath ground to beleeve, that as really, though in a more glorious manner, than we can apprehend, his cries, his sighs, his sobs pierce, as it were, the heart of tender Jesus; may not this allay a little his griefe? May not this be some ease to his minde, and half health to his broken bones, and to his pained and wearie Spirit? If thou, O beleever, saw by faith Christ taking thee up in his Armes, laying thee in his bosome, weeping over thy teares, blowing upon thy wounds and sores; and saying, wo is me, my dear Childe, who hath hurt thee? Who durst do that to thee? and kissing thy sores; would not this make thee half whole and more? Would not this make thine Affliction light? Yea, would it not make thee forget all thy paine and trouble, and fall a singing? Would it not make thee forget thy sorrow, and fall about his neck in love, blessing him for what is come, and

rejoicing that thou art counted worthie to suffer at the hands of any for his sake; and to account all but light, that can befall thee for his sake?

2. The beleeving of this would answere many troublesome Objections and Doubts. As (1.) *Hath not the Lord now forgotten me?* Oh not, would the faith of this say. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, and her sucking Child crying out of paine, in her very eares? Could the Mother of the Child, while standing before *Salomon*, and hearing him command to divide the Childe, and seeing the sword drawn, forget her Childe, when her bowels were yerning upon the Child? No certainly. How then can Christ forget thee, when his bowels are yerning upon thee. (2.) *Doth the Lord see my Affliction, and every Ingredient in my distress?* The faith of this would hush this doubt to the door: Can he forget; shall he not know and see that, which he feeleth? When every ingredient, that affecteth thee stounds his heart, can he be ignorant of it? (3.) *But Oh We fear, say they, he hath cast us out of doores; and so suffereth any to example on us, that will.* But the faith of this would answere, that his Sympathizing heart giveth assurance, that he will call all
to

an account, for every touch of their finger; and look on it as a touch of the apple of his eye; and he will reckon with them in due time, as helpers forward of the Affliction, and as doing what they had no commission or warrand for. (4) But alas! say they, *It is for our iniquities*: Yet will the faith of this say, A mother must keep still a Mothers heart, even when she is correcting the Childe for his miscarriages (5.) But *when shall it be at an end? Will he ever rid me out of this trouble?* Yes, will the faith of this say, His suffering with thee in thy sufferings, will not suffer him to let thee endure more, than thy strength can bear. And his Compassion and Sympathie is pouising him up (as we may so speak) to deliver thee, in the time and manner, that his Wisdom seeth to be best; as really as the yerning of thy bowels ever moved thee to rescue thy childe out of the fire. (6.) But *I am no better for all that is come upon me; but rather worse.* Yet the faith of this will say, that God cannot forget himself, He knoweth our mould and fashion: the moving of his bowels will at length put him, to take that difficultie out of the way.

3. The beleieving of this truth should be an effectual meane to bring the Afflicted beleever unto a sweet Submission of Spirit,

under his Crosses and Afflictions; to a calme and composed way of lying under the trouble: For a common souldier will bear his hardships the better, that he knoweth his General shareth with him in that lot, and is bearing a part of his burden, and is not insensible thereof; nor unconcerned therewith. And when this will quiet the heart of a souldier, when he findeth that his Commander is compassionating his misery and suffering with him; how much more should this Consideration, that the great King and Prince of Israel, the Captain of the Hosts of the Lord, is, in a more tender, compassionate, kindly manner, Sympathizing with his suffering members, than one person can do with another, cause the soul sit down in silence, and possesse it self in patience, yea and rejoyce in his lot, because of this warm-hearted Sympathizer.

4. The faith of this would give the beleever full ground of perswasion, that Christ hath a tender affection for him. It is a troubling temptation to the Child of God, in a day of outward Affliction and Calamity, to have these thoughts rolling in his mind, *Can it be, that I can be beloved of God, who am so dealt with? Have I a room in his Affection, all this time? do not these dispensations of his speak out anger against me?* But the faith of this, that

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. 273

that Christ is Sympathizing with the poor man, and taking a lift of his burthen, would calme the soul, as to this, and quite remove this doubt. When the Jewes saw, how Christ weept over *Lazarus*, they said, *behold how he loved him Joh. 11: 35, 36.* and may not the beleever say so also, behold how Christ loveth me, when he seeth by faith, that Christ is weeping with him, sighing with him, pained with his trouble, sensible of his grieve, yea more sensible thereof, and touched therewith, than his neereſt relation could be? If we saw a Woman making an heavy lamentation, and bitterly crying out for her Child, sick or in paine, would not every one, that saw it, say, O how dearly doth she love that Child? And may not the beleever say the same of himself? O! how doth Christ love me? Yea, he could not but do it, if he saw and beleevd this truth. Is it not manifest then, how faith could suck life out of this Consideration, in the saddest of outward troubles?

5. Nay, not only would the faith of this help to a subsisting life, in time of tribulation; but it would also helpe unto a Life of Joy, and make the beleever hearty and cheerful under the crosse: For is it

supposable, that a soul can be dejected, or discouraged, that hath the lively faith of this? What will make his heart glade, if this do it not; to know, that Christ Jesus not only knoweth and is acquainted with his distresses and trouble; but is also affected there with, and moved thereat, as ever a tender hearted Mother was moved at the miseries of her dear Childe?

6. The faith of this would fully perswade the beleever, that he should not be destroyed with the rod, that it should do him no harme, that he should not be overcharged. Who would think, that the Mother, who was already weeping for her weak Child, and crying out, woe is me for the heavie burden, that is on his back, would crush the Child with an heavier burthen? And shall the man fear, that Christ shall lay more upon him, than he is able to bear, and shall break him in pieces with his Afflictions, when by faith he seeth him already Sympathizing with him, and crying out, as it were, woe is me for the misery of my dear Childe?

7. The faith of this would cause the man lift up his head in hope; and conclude, that there is hope in Israel concerning our matters: He would read upon this Consideration sure grounds of hope of an outgate and delivery, in Gods own time, knowing in himself,

CHAP. VII. Christs Sympathie. 275

self; how his Sympathy and Yerning of bowels would pouse him to labour, by all meanes possible, by night or by day, in all haste, be the hazard what it will, yea with the hazard of his Life, and all he hath, to deliver his tender and beloved Childe out of the enemies hands, or out of fire or water; and how he could not rest night nor day, nor eate, nor drink, till he had done all he could. and set all others a doing for him, that he could move or prevaile with: for from this Sympathie, which is real, strong, kindly, and heavenly, and so, far beyond mans soerie Sympathie, he might rationally and with good ground inferre, that Christ will make heaven and earth know, how he is grieved for the miseries of his people, and how his heart is pierced with their calamities: And set heaven and earth and all a work to relieve his Childe; and that Christ is making all the haste he can (to wit, according to the wise Counsels of his holy Will, who is God over all, blessed for ever,) and so will come in the very just minute of the appointed time, and will delay no longer. The Mother, howbeit her bowels make a great stir within her for the Child, when his leg is broken, yet she will have patience untill it be set aright by a skilful hand; and will suffer the wound of her childe to be search-

ed to the bottom, howbeit the Child foolishly should think, that she desired not that he should be out of paine. We are foolish and foolishly hastie; but our Lord is wise; and notwithstanding of his delayes, yet the faith of this, would make the soul say, seing I see Christ weeping (as it were) and making a do for me, I shall not lye in this Condition, beyond the best time; he will save me, and that right early: And this could not but cause the soul sit down, and enjoy the life of patience with hope; and be far from saying, He hath cast me off, He will look no more after me, nor once enquire, how it is with me. Yea this would sharpen the sight of the beleever, and cause him see Christ coming, rideing upon the wings of the winde, skipping over the mountains of Bethel, as a Ro and a young hart, because his bowels are moved, and are yerning upon me, I know then, He will not stay; therefore will I waite for Him, for he that will come, shall come, and will not tarry.

8. It is a great advantage to a beleever, wrestling with Tribulations, Temptations, and Afflictions, to know, that they have an open door and accessse unto the throne of grace, through Iesus Christ. Now the Faith of this Truth, that Christ is Sympathizing

thizing with them, in all their Afflictions
 taketh away all hinkes and jealousies, as to
 this: they cannot now doubt, but Christ
 will make them welcome, come when they
 will; when they see, how he is lamenting
 their case, condoleing their miserie, afflicted
 with their sufferings; they are sure, he will
 not keep them at the door; nay, they may
 be perswaded then, that the yerning of his
 bowels, and his Sympathie hath set him, as
 it were, to his work of interceeding with
 the Father for them, before they could speak
 for themselves. When a childe seeth the
 mother weeping for his paine and hurt, he
 can come to her bosome with confidence,
 and tell her all that aileth him, and will not
 fear, that she will shoot him away; the
 sight of her Sympathie emboldeneth and
 heartneth him to come, even though he
 be conscious of many faults; so the Childe
 of God, though conscience of guilt do
 much stare him in the face, yet, seeing this
 Sympathie of Christs with him by faith, he
 can take boldness, and lay out all his
 case before him, and complaine of all the
 wrongs, indignities, affronts done by ene-
 mies to his person, name. or goods; and
 thus poure forth his soul in the Lords bo-
 some, with great delight, confidence
 and Satisfaction. It is no small advantage

278 Consider. 3. The Lord

for the Believer, to know that he hath an High Priest, that can be touched with the feeling of his infirmities, and was in all points tempted, as he is, but without sin Heb. 4: 15. he may come boldly unto the throne of grace, that he may obtaine mercy, and finde grace to help in time of need, Vers. 16.

CHAP. VIII.

CONSIDERATION III.

The Lord's assuming to himself
the Stile of a *Redeemer*.

AS the Name of the Lord is a strong Toure, to which the righteous run, and are saife; so the Lord doth purposely take to himself such Names and Titles, as may give his people ground of hope, in an evil time, and of encouragment to run to him in their strait. We shall at this time only consider this title of a *Saviour*, or *Redeemer*, that we may hence see what Faith can draw from this, in order to a life, in a time of sore Oppression and Bondage. When the Lord is speaking to his people, under the crosse
he

CHAP. VIII. is the Redeemer. 279

he holdeth forth himself under the most comfortable and heart-strengthening Notions; and among others, under this of being a Deliverer & a Redeemer; and as He proclaimeth himself under these Names; so his people lay hold by faith on this Name. and on the relation signified thereby, for their encouragement, and comfort, in their distresses; whence it is manifest, that faith can suck life and strength from this, in a dead-like time;

We shall therefore, in order to the clearing up of this ground of faith, briefly propose some Particulars, considerable to this end.

I, We finde the Lord, upon the ground of his being a Redeemer to his people, comforting them, in their Troubles and Afflictions, and exhorting them to take courage to themselves, in the mean time, and so to live *Esai. 43: 14: 19. Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the holy one of Israel, for your sake, I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their Nobles, and the Ca'deans, whose cry is in the ships &c. — behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, &c.* He holdeth forth here a sweet promise unto them, to comfort them against the evil day; and

to assure them of the truth of the thing, he speaketh of it partly as done already: And to the end they might comfort themselves, in the sure hope and expectation of it, and needed not make any question of the matter, he giveth them this ground, title & stile to feed upon, *Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Lord Jehovah, who is engag'd unto you, and standeth in the relation of a Redeemer unto you, speaketh thus; and therefore you need not question or doubt of the truth of it; but live in hope, that the day of delivery shall dawne, in due time.* As also in the beginning of that same Chapter, he thus bespeaketh them by his Prophet; *But now thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob; and he that formed thee O Israel, feare not, for I have redeemed thee &c.* and againe vers. 1. *For I am the Lord, thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour, I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.* And upon this followeth vers. 5, 6. *Fear not, for I am with thee, I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west, I will say to the North, Give up, and to the South, Keep not back, bring my Sones from far, and my Daughters from the ends of the earth.* So that he would have them possessing their Souls in patience, without fear, or trouble, because he was related to them, as their Redeemer,

CHAP. VIII. is the Redeemer. 281

deemer, . and would be to them to the life ,
 whatever that Name or Relation did import.
 So likewise *Eesai. 44: 6.* Thus saith the Lord ,
 the King of Israel, and his Redeemer , the Lord
 of Hosts, &c. and what followeth upon this?
 See *verse 8.* Fear ye not , neither be ye afraid.
 He would have them resting , in full confi-
 dence and assurance , that he would be as
 good as his word , because of this his rela-
 tion unto them , and therefore upon this
 ground he would have them comforting
 themselves , under all their distress, and
 shaking off all disquieting and discompos-
 ing feares. So *Eesai. 54: 4.* Fear not , for
 thou shalt not be ashamed , neither be thou con-
 founded , for thou shalt not be put to shame ; for
 thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth , and
 shalt not remember the reproach of thy widow-
 hood any more. And what is given for the
 ground of all this? For (saith he *vers. 5.*)
 thy maker is thine Husband, the Lord of hosts
 is his name , and thy Redeemer , the holy One of
 Israel , the God of the whole earth shall be
 be called. See also *Eesai. 41: 14.* and *44.*
v. 24. &c.

2. We finde the Lord, upon this ground,
 in plaine termes assuring them of a delivery
 out of their miserie and thralldom *Eesai. 49:*
24, 25, 26. Shall the prey be taken from the
 mighty , or the lawful Captive delivered? But
 thou

thus saith the Lord, even the Captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him, that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: And all flesh shall know, that I the Lord, am thy Saviour, and Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. He promised to bring about such a remarkable and signal delivery, as should cause all on-lookers, and all that heard thereof, say and see, that He was related unto them; and particularly, that he stood in the relation of a Saviour, and of a Redeemer unto them: And therefore the consideration of this might have settled them in hope, and quieted them in the assured expectation that an out-gate would come. A great and wonderfull delivery is promised *Esaï. 60.* from the beginning, and the same is at large branched forth, in its many and sweet ingredients, and attendants; and among other things it is promised *vers. 14.* That the sones of those that afflicted them should come bending unto them; and all that despised them should bow themselves down at the soles of their feet; & that they should be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of Israel.

CHAP. VIII. is the Redeemer. 283

Israel: yea and *vers.* 15. should be made an eternal excellency, a joy of many Generations. And what is the ground of all? and thou shalt know (*vers.* 16.) that I the Lord, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. As if the had said, I shall then give a demonstration of that Relation, I stand in unto you; and shall, to your own conviction, act the part of a Saviour and of a Redeemer, and give full proof of my being the same, that my stile importeth. So *Ier.* 50: 34, 35. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the Children of Israel, and the Children of Judah were oppressed together, and all that took them Captives, held them fast, they refused to let them go: Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name, he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the Inhabitants of Babylon. He would assuredly plead their cause, seeing he was their Redeemer. There is food then here for faith, in an evil time. *Zech* 10: 8. I will bisse for them (that is, the house of Judah, and the house of Joseph, and of Ephraim *vers.* 6. 7.) and gather them, for I have redeemed them, and they shall increase, as they have increased. So *Ier.* 31: 10, 11. He that Scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. And what ground is there for this? For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob,

Jacob, and transformed him from the hand of him, that was stronger than he.

3. We finde the Saints receiving their mercies and out-gates, from Him, as such an one, and acknowledging him to be such, and praising him as such, upon the account of their deliveries; so that their out-gates & deliverances were confirmations to them of this standing Relation, and of the Lord's answering this stile 2 Sam. 22: 2, 3. Psal. 18: 2. When David was delivered out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul, then did he sing this song. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortresse & my deliverer. The God of my rock, in him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horne of my Salvation, my high tower and my refuge &c.* So Psal. 59: 16, 17. But I will sing of thy power, yea I will sing aloud of thy mercy, in the morning; for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Vnto thee, O my strength, will I sing; for God is my defence, and the God of my Mercy Psal. 144: 1. Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth mine hands to war, and my fingers to fight. But whence came all this? vers. 2. He is my goodness, and my fortress, my high Tower; my deliverer, and my shield. See Exod. 15: 13.

4. We the finde Saints, in a time of affliction and trouble, eyeing this, and improving

proving it unto the strengthening of their faith, in their addresses to God by prayer Ps. 17. 7. *Shew thy marvellous loving kindness: And what is the Argument he useth? O thou that savest, by thy right hand, them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up.* He fixeth upon this, that the Lord was such a Saviour, as had this for his Work & Office, to save such as trust in him. So Ps. 40: 17. *But I am poor and needy, the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.* So also Ps. 70: 5. The like we finde Esai. 63: 15. 16. *Lord look down from heaven (saith the Church) and behold from the habitation of thine Holiness, and of thy Glory &c.* And what argument is used? Among others this is used, in the following words. *Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting; Or as it is in the margine, our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name.* That is thy stile and title, and we plead with thee upon this account, that thou wouldest answer thy name. *Jeremiah also pleadeth after this manner Jer. 14: 8. O the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in times of trouble, why shouldst thou be, as a stranger in the land &c.*

5. Yea we finde the Lord assuming this stile unto himself, as his Prerogative Royall, as that, which is due to him alone, and in the Glory whereof none ought to share with

286 Consider. 3. The Lord

with him *Eesai. 43: 11. I, I the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour.* And againe *Eesai. 45: 21. — no God else beside me, a just God, and a Saviour; none beside me.* Sure then, this must be a firme bottome to stand upon; for if this be his Prerogative Royal, He will, in his appearances for his people, answer the same: And prove that he is as good, as his Title.

6. Yea, upon this ground, we finde him putting people to this duty of looking to him, and expecting all their out-gates and deliverances from him: For immediately after that he had asserted, that he was a just God and a Saviour, and none else *Eesai. 45: 21. He subjoineth vers. 22. look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* Salvation and Redemption must come that way, or no way; and if there be a looking unto him, as the alone Saviour, Salvation will come: their looking shall not be in vaine.

7. Upon a right sight of this, we finde that the people of God have triumphed over their enemies, having seen their ruine as a necessary result and consequence hereof *Eesai. 47: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Come down and sit in the dust, O Virgine Daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground — for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the milstones*
and

CHAP. VIII. is the Redeemer. 287

and grinde meal ——— thy nakedness shall be uncovered. And the Reason was, the Lord would take vengeance, and would not meet them as a man. And whereupon was all this founded? See vers. 4 *As for our Redeemer the Lord of Hosts is his Name, the holy One of Israel.* They had such an interest in, and relation unto the Lord, as their Redeemer; and therefore they might well inferre as vers. 5. *Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O Daughter of the Caldeans; for thou shalt no more be called the Lady of Kingdomes.* We finde David likewise, as it were, defying all trouble, upon this account Psal. 27: v. 1, 2, 3. So Psal. 94: 22, 23. *The Lord is my defence, and my God is the rock of my refuge.* And what then? *And he shall bring upon them* (that is the enemies, that sat upon the throne of iniquity and condemned innocent blood vers. 20: 21:) *their own iniquities and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea the Lord our God shall cut them off.*

From all which we see, how faith may get a life, in the worst of times, by feeding on such a ground of Hope, Comfort, Joy and Strength, as this is. We may see also the rich and noble advantage, that the redeemed people of the Lord have, who have such a relation to, and interest in this Lord Ransomer and Redeemer, whose sole
Pre-

Prerogative it is, to be the Saviour of his people; and who will owne that title in deed and in reality, and prove himself to be such in truth; for whatever sorrow they may be under here for a time, and whatever bondage, hardshipe and slavery, they may be put to suffer; yet their Redeemer liveth, and the Lord of hosts is his name. This bare up *Jobs* heart under all his pressures, inward and outward. I know, that my Redeemer liveth *Job. 19: v. 25.* There is a day coming, when the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy upon their head, they shall obtaine gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away *Eesai. 35: 9. and 51: 11.* The year of the Lords redeemed will come *Eesai. 63: 4.* and that will be a day of vengeance in the heart of God: And the day of the Lords vengeance, is the year of recompences for the Controversie of Zion *Eesai 34: 8.* The day is coming when they shall give thanks unto the Lord for he is good. For his mercy is for ever, when he hath redeemed them from the hand of the Enemy, and gathered them out of the Lands, from the East, and from the West, from the North, and from the South *Psal. 107: 1. 2. 3.* See what is said *Revel. 14: 3, 4.* and they sung, as it were, a new song, before the throne, and before the foure beasts, and the elders, and no man could learne

learne that song, but the hundred and fourtie and foure thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. — These are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth: These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

With what confidence may they go unto God, and pray, that he would bring them out of the net, that the wicked have laid privily for them; and commit their Soul and Spirit into the hand of God, even upon this ground, that the Lord God of Truth hath redeemed them, as *David* did *Psal* 31: 4, 5? His poor redeemed ones have many temptations to meet with here, and their enemies are vigilant, and active, malicious and desperat; and so are seeking by all meanes to reprech, slander and backbite them, that they may put them to shame; and do speak lies, and grievous things proudly and contemptuously against them, that they might get them put to death; as *David* found in his own experience, in that same *Psal*m. vers. 11, 13, 18. But this is a cordial against all, they are Redeemed, and their Redeemer liveth, and is the holy One of Israel, and the Lord of Hosts; and therefore will take course with these wicked Enemies, in due time; and is able to crush them and all their wicked devices, and de-

feat all their Counsels and Machinations against his ransomed ones. He redeemeth from deceit Psal. 72: 14. *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*

If his redeemed ones have to do with men of power, and cruelty, who will hearken to no right or reason; but oppress, plunder, spoil, enjure, wound and kill; their Redeemer is one, who redeemeth from Violence, as the fore-cited passage Psal. 72: v. 14. sheweth, and 2 Sam. 22: v. 3. — *Thou savest me from Violence*: He will, when he seeth that it is for his glory, and for their real good, break the yoke of the Oppressour, and set them at liberty; and if not, he can and will redeem from the evil of that violence and wrong, that it shall not harme them, as to their maine interest. And at length the Redeemed of the Lord must be and shall be delivered out of the hands of all their enemies, *I will ransom them* (saith the Lord Hos. 13: 14.) *from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague: O grave, I will be thy Destruction, repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* See also 1 Cor. 15: 55.

If they have to do with inward corruptions, temptations, outbreacking sins, and the

the like, that prove vexing and troublesome unto them, especially in a day of outward trouble and temptation: They may know, for their comfort, that He is a Redeemer here also; *For he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities* Psal. 130: 8. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquitie, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* Tit. 2: 14. He gave himself for his redeemed Church, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish Ephef. 5: 26: 27.

If they have feares of their miscarriages that trouble them; the times being evil, and the way full of snares, and they conscious to themselves of their blindness and weakness, they fear they shall not go off the stage without a blot, but shall in one particular or other give the enemy ground of rejoicing and insulting, and grieve the hearts of the godly; they would know, that He, who hath redeemed them, will teach them and lead them, *Esai. 48: 17. Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profite, which leadeth thee by the way, which thou shouldest go.* The Redeemer is careful

and tender of the redeemed ones, he will not lose them by the way, after he hath redeemed them at such a rate, as is his own blood, and bought them out of the hand of Justice, of Law, of Satan the Jailour, and of sin the fetters: He will compleet his Redemption.

If they should fear, that because of their folly and sin, in wilful departing from him, and running out of his hand, when he was leading them by the way, he should not look upon them againe, but suffer them to their own wills, & to wander untill they perish; they would know, that He is a merciful Redeemer, and will receive them, whensoever they returne, and pardon all their iniquities *Esai. 44: 21, 22: Remember these, O Jacob and Israel: for thou art my Servant: I have formed thee; thou art my Servant, O Israel; thou shalt not be forgotten of me, I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.*

In a word, if the great Redemption; through the blood of the Lamb; that is, from the Wrath and Curse of God, from Hell, from the Power of the Law, from the Dominion of Satan, from the Slavery of sin, from a present evil World &c. be fixed and sure, through faith in the Redeemer,
all

CHAP. VIII. is the Redeeme1. 293

all the petty evils, that they foresee, or apprehend in their way, need not trouble them. If the great Redemption stand (and stand it must, for the *foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his* 2 Tim, 2: 19.) all is sure, for the Redemption from all these under and petty evils must necessarily follow, so as may best contribute to the carrying on and perfecting of the great and everlasting Redemption. He, who hath bought them out of the hand of Justice, hath bought them out of the hand of the Devil, and out of the hand of all the Devils Instruments, and from all that they can do, or imagine against them.

May not faith then feed upon this feast and live, let the world rage as it will? May not beleivers from this Consideration draw inferences of Comfort, Joy in the Holy Ghost, Peace that passeth knowledge, Hope that shall never make them ashamed, Strength and Support, that shall carry them thorow, and of Stedfastness in a day of trial? Here the Just may live by faith.

CHAP. IX.

CHAP. IX.

CONSIDERATION IV.

**Taken from the many faithful
Promises, made of Delivery
out of trouble.**

THere are, as is manifest, many great and precious promises set down in the Scriptures of God; and promises both plaine and particular, concerning deliveries from outward Trouble, Bondage, Oppression, Distress, and Persecution; and they are set down for the Comfort and Establishment of the people of God: And here is a richly covered table with all varieties, for faith to feed upon. The promises are the kindly food of faith; by them and through them it sucketh-in from the fountaine of all fulness, God in Christ, all that the poor soul standeth in need of, in every exigent and strait; hence there are promises suited to every case, that the beleever can be into: which is a clear demonstration of the riches of the Love and Tenderness of God toward his Children.

We are only here to speak of such Promises, as concerne the outward trouble, that

that his people meet with , at the hands of men, given to persecute and afflict the people of God, in a world ; which , as the case is ordinarie , so are they many and ample ; and sure they have a voice with them, & carry comfort and life in them to the beleeving soul , while under Affliction and Oppression. And in speaking a little concerning these , in prosecution of our scope, we would

First, Take notice of some (and but of some) of these many Promises , that are scattered up and down the Scriptures , in great multitudes , answerable to the case mentioned ; Some whereof we finde annexed unto duties called for , especially at such a time , and so proposed , as it were conditionally ; such as these Psal. 50: v. 15. *Call upon me , in the day of trouble , and I will deliver thee , and thou shalt glorifie me.* Ps. 91: v. 15. *He shall call upon me in trouble , I will deliver him , and honour him* V. 16. *With long life will I satisfie him , and shew him my Salvation.* So Psal 33: 18, 19. *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him , upon them that hope in his mercy. To deliver their soul from death , and to keep them alive in famine.* And 37: 40. *And the Lord shall helpe them and deliver them ; he shall deliver them from the wicked , and save them , because they trust in him.* And 145:

v. 18, 19. The Lord is nigh unto all them, that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him; he also will beare their cry and save them Prov. 20: 22. — Waite on the Lord, and he shall save thee. And many moe such there are. Againe, some we finde set down, in a more absolute manner, without any such previous condition annexed, as (to mentione only a few) Psal. 9: 18. For the needy shall not alwayes be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Psal. 12: v. 5. For the Oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in saistry from him that puffeth at him. And 34: 19, 20. Many are the Afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them are broken. And 94: 14, 15. For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it. And 97: 10, 11. — He preserveth the souls of his Saints: he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked, light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. And 103: 6. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Jer. 51: 36. Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for

for thee, &c. Zeph. 3: v. 14. 15. &c. Sing O Daughter of Zion, be glade and rejoyce with all the heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgements, he hath cast out thine enemy — thou shalt not see evil any more — The Lord thy God, in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy — I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn Assembly — Behold, at that time, will I undo all that Afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out &c.

But Secondly, In Order to our right improvement of these and the like Promises, we would know.

1. That God is faithful, in all his Promises; for he is faithful that promised Heb. 10: 23. He remembered his holy promise — and brought forth his people Psal. 105: 42: 43. He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and mercy with them that love him Deut. 7: v. 9. He is faithful 1 Cor. 1: 9. and 10: v. 13. 1 Thes. 5. 24. Nay, his faithfulness is great, and reacheth to the clouds Psal. 36: 5. He will not suffer his faithfulness to fail, his Covenant will be not break, nor alter the thing, that is gone out of his lips Psal. 89: 33, 34. His faithfulness doth not alter; for it is unto all generations Psal. 119: 90. He is a God, that cannot lie Tit. 1: v. 2. Yea it is impossible for him to

lie Heb. 6: 18: He is not a man, that he should lie Num. 23: v. 19. A God of Truth, without iniquitie, just and right is he Deut 32. vers. 4. Therefore the words of his mouth are tried words, and all his Promises must have a sure accomplishment

2. That the Promises are now secured, and ensured unto beleivers upon another ground. besides this; even upon the Mediation of Christ, who hath purchased all the good things promised, and hath by the blood of the Covenant confirmed the same, and all the Promises thereof; and by his death he hath given force unto his Testament, wherein all the Legacies are conveyed by Promises. So that all the Promises are in him yea, and in him Amen 2Cor. 1: v. 20.

3. Whatever accomplishment these Promises and the like have had, in former times, they are not yet out of date; the good, wrapped up in them, is not exhausted; though the Church of old found them all made good, and received the good thing held forth therein; yet they stand as full of sap as ever: For *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope Rom. 15: 4. These Promises are not recorded in Scripture, as mere matters*

matters of History ; but are as a river , the streames whereof must make glade the whole City of God ; and as a table alwayes standing covered with variety of dishes , for the supply and comfort of all the Children of the House ; The Church , now and of old , is but one Church , all make up one Company of the Redeemed , and are under one Head and Husband , having the same heirshipe. They grow all upon the same root and stock , and so partake of the fatness of the root.

4. Hence beleevers , in all ages , have a right to the same Promises , wherefore they are said to be *heires of the promises Heb. 6: 17.* The Promises belonging to the Covenant , all the Children of the Covenant have a right unto them , and every beleever , being within the Covenant , may challenge them , as belonging to him , because he hath a right unto the *Mother-Promise , I will be thy God.* This is the fountaine , out of which all the rest run as streames. Yea Promises that in the Letter would seem to have been made peculiarly to one particular beleever , may by others be applied by faith , if the Promise be of such things as are of Common advantage and necessity : As the Promise made unto *Joshua Chap. 1: 5.* ———
I will never leave thee , nor forsake thee , may

be applied by other particular persons, even in the dayes of the Gospel; as the Apostle teacheth *Heb. 13: 5.* and that unto other uses, as occasion offereth.

Whence 5. We see, that the Promises admit of large Ampliations, being very comprehensive, and therefore applicable to many and various cases, beside what might have been especially designed or intended, when the Promise was first uttered, as to the Persons, for the comfort of whom they were first given out: As we see, in that last cited Passage *Heb. 13: 5.* that Promise, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, spoken to *Joshua Chap. 1: 5.* to encourage him in his wars and fightings against the *Canaanites*, of whose land he was going to take Possession; and so gave him ground of assurance of the Lords presence, guiding, supporting and strengthening him, against all difficulties, is applied by the Apostle, as implying the Lords making up all their particular wants, and supplying all their necessities; for he bringeth it in, as an argument to move them to be content with their present state, and to walk without covetousness: or if we should take this promise, as meant of what was said to *Jacob Gen. 28: 15.* the matter will be the same way evident. Beside that there are many Promises conceived in
general

general comprehensive termes, so framed, as it were, of purpose, that beleevers in their severall particular exigences, might faithfully and warrantably betake themselves thereto, and make a comfortable application thereof.

6 We would distinguish betwixt Promises of Spiritual mercies and favours, and Promises of Temporal good things: As these are less necessarie than those, so they should be less in our account: And though the Lord be true and faithful in all his Promises; yet he hath reserved a greater latitude to himself, in the bestowing of them, and is free to bestow them, in the letter, or in the equivalent, or rather, in what is better; so in our applying of them, and in praying thereupon we ought to use much humble Submission, leaving it to the wise will of the Lord, to grant it, in what manner, he thinketh good: Although it is true, when the Lord hath a mind to bestow a particular temporal favour, he may secretly prompt the soul to an holy importunity; which yet neither should be drawn into example by others, in suing for temporal things; nor should be a preparative to themselves, in aftertimes, without the like secret impulse, wherein withal much spiritual Wisdom and Sobriety is necessary;

And it is certain, his people do not fare the worse, at his hands, that, with great Submission, they put large blanks in his hand.

7. As to Spiritual Promises, we must also distinguish betwixt such as are, about such Particulars, as concerne the very *being* of Godliness & Christianity, without which the man can not subsist as a Christian; And other Spiritual Promises, that are of good things, not so much necessary to the *being*, as to the *well being* of a Christian: such as are concerning Comforts, and Higher Measures of grace, and the like: As in these last, the Lord hath reserved a latitude to himself; so he calleth for a greater Submission at our hands.

8. And for this cause, we would remember, that all the Promises, as they are ensured and made over to Christ, the Head of the Church; so they are principally granted to the Church, and to every particular beleever, as a member thereof, and according to his interest therein: So that, though every Particular beleever receive not every particular Promise accomplished to him, in the Letter, but only such as are necessary for his being a member, and others, as the Lord seeth good for his particular good and condition; yet all the
Pro-

Promises take effect, in that they are performed to the Church, in some one member or other, at one time or other, as the great and only wise Dispensator of all, Jesus Christ the Administrator, and Executor of his own Testament, seeth fit. As in the Natural Body, though every member partake of life; yet it is not requisite, that the feet should have all that the head or heart, or other parts stand in need of; when the heart is fainting, it calleth for a cordial, and though the cordial be not applied to the hand or foot, but more immediatly to the heart, the whole Body, and every member, as a member thereof, receiveth advantage thereby. Hence, we being members one of another, Promises made good to any of the members of the Body, should be as made good to ourselves; and we should rejoice thereat, and observe the faithfulness of God to the Church, in fulfilling particular promises, to such or such members, as he seeth, shall contribute most to the good of the whole. If the foot be wounded, a plaister should be applied thereto, and the hand should not think it is neglected, because a plaister is not applied to it too.

9. Promises concerning the growth, prosperitie and advancement of the Kingdom
and

and Church of Christ, in general, should be with great sobriety applied to particular Churches and Places; seeing the Kingdom of Christ may be a coming and growing Kingdom, though his Interest may be manifestly upon the decaying hand, in this or that particular place. Yet there may be several passages in the Providence of God, giving great ground of hope, of the Lords purpose of good, towards this or that particular Church; which may and should be zealously improven, in pleading with him: and however matters go, the Lord will take it well, that people be earnest with him, in the behalfe of this or that particular Church; yet with Submission, as to the time, manner and measure of his appearing for her; seeing He may build up the Walls of *Jerusalem* in troublous times, & may advance the Spiritual good of the Church, though outward trouble remaine, yea and increase.

10. Hence all our earnest seeking of the accomplishment of Promises, would be designed unto a spiritual end: As our seeking of delivery from outward trouble and persecution, for the truths sake, would not be to the end, we might enjoy ease, quietness, and good accommodation, and have liberty to live in Peace under our vine and figtree;

figtree; but to the end, the Spiritual good of the Church and of ourselves may be advanced; for the Promises must be looked on, as purchased for a spiritual end, and as running in a spiritual channel: And thus, we might finde many a time the promise of delivery made good, though the delivery we looked for were not granted, as when the Spiritual end, for which these outward deliveries should have been sought for by us, was attained another way, even though the outward trouble remained.

II. Hence we may see, that as to particular Promises of outward good things, the Lord hath a Liberty in his own hand; to grant them in the Letter and *in specie*, or not, as He thinketh good: so that Believers, in their seeking after these promised things, ought to be very Submissive, not only as to the time and manner of his granting of them, but even as to the granting or not granting of the particular it self unto us: For sometimes he seeth it good, not to grant the particular good thing, as delivery from an oppressing enemy; and so useth his absolute Sovereignty, or rather his fatherly Wisdom and Goodness, measuring out these mercies, as pleaseth him best, and as he seeth it will contribute
most

most to his glory, and to their real good. Hence, notwithstanding of these Promises, many a time-particular Churches have been kept under Affliction and sharpe persecution, many a yeer; and particular Persons have been kept under, all their dayes.

12. Yet for all this, we must not think, that the faithfulness of God doth faile; nor can he be said to have forgotten his promises: For his promises of these things were not absolute; nor was the meaning of the promise, that they should be granted, at all times, and in the very Letter: They were upon the matter conditionall, *to wit*, if the Lord saw, it would tend to his glory, to give the very particular; and if he saw, it would be for their good, and not for their hurt. Yea this holdeth true; That either God giveth the particular promised, when it is asked, or that which is as good, or better, in its place; and thus the promise is more then made good: He would not give *Paul. 2 Cor. 12.* the particular he was very earnest for, and begged of the Lord three severall times; yet, when he said to him, *My grace is sufficient for thee*, he got as good, and, as matters then stood, that which was much better:

13. Notwithstanding of this, it would be

be remembered, that oftentimes the Lord is pleased, to grant the very particular, in Spece and Letter, that was promised, and is sought after, *to wit*, outward Delivery. How often did *David* finde this true in experience? He cried, and the Lord answered him, and granted to him all his desire; as the *Book of the Psalmes* doth abundantly witness, and the experience of many other Christians confirmeth.

But it will be said, Seing matters are so, as to external deliveries, and the like favours, in the time of outward calamities, that the Lord seeth it good sometimes, not to grant the particular desired; how can Faith feed upon the promises, and help the soul of the beleever unto a life, in a day of sad Afflictions and Tribulations?

In Satisfaction to this, we would *Thirdly* consider what improvment Faith may make of the Promises, as to these things, even notwithstanding of what is said: And

I. It cannot but yeeld matter of Joy and Comfort unto the Childe of God, to know for a truth, and to have the undoubted grounds of Assurance, that, however it be with him in particular, it shall be well with the Church; the Promises shall all be made good to her, He is faithful, who hath said it, and He will also do it. He will make
good

good his word, in all points to her; not one of them shall fail. Can a Christian soul know, and hear of this, and not be made to forget his own sorrow and suffering? Can a kindly Son of the familie not be refreshed and comforted, in the midst of his personal sufferings, to know that it is and will be well with his Fathers Familie? We see David Psal. 69. while he is in sad exercises, thorow the Psalme, wherein he was a Type of Jesus, unto whom many of the Particulars mentioned are in a special manner applied, comforting himself, under all these pressures, with this vers. 34, 35, 36. *Let the Heavens and Earth praise him, (a remarkable change from what was to be seen in the preceeding part of the Psalm) the seas and every thing, that moveth therein: For God will save Zion, and build the Cities of Judah, that they may dwell there, and have it in Possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherite it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein.* So Psal. 102. where the Psalmist is in a very Afflicted Condition, and overwhelmed, and is pouring out his complaint before the Lord, the Psalm being the Prayer and Expressions of such an one, as the title sheweth. Now what gave him Comfort, in the midst of all this? See Vers. 13, 16. *Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion*
——— When

When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. The faith of Zions prosperity, upon the ground of the Promise, was enough to support & comfort his soul.

2. Whatever be the beleivers present outward case; & howbeit he see no appearance of a delivery in haste; yet he may finde Life, Strength and Comfort, in the unchangeable Promises, made concerning his eternal Salvation; for thence he may inferre, & sing upon good ground, that neither Tribulation, nor Distress, nor Persecution, nor Famine, nor Nakedness, nor Peril, nor Sword shall separate him from the Love of Christ *Rom. 8. 35.* The treasure, and the mans stock being sure, what can a small inconsiderable losse do? May not the thoughts of the sealed Charters of the everlasting Inheritance comfort a man, under a shour of soft raine?

3. The Promises are comfortable, as speaking out the wonderful love and care of God, towards his weak and faint-hearted followers; therefore are they shaped and made fit for every case, a poor beleever can be into; when the man thinks of this, that God hath had mind of him, and prepared cordials for him, what ever case he can be into; how must his heart leap for Joy? How light and easie will his sickness be, when he seeth by faith, the Lord of
Heaven

Heaven and Earth, coming to his bed side, and preparing to him a strengthening cordial, and holding it to his mouth? How tolerable will his pain be, when he seeth the Lord preparing a roller, and salve to cure him of that hurt?

4. It is refreshing unto a wearie traveller, to have a sutable companion with him, that is keeping him up with refreshing discourses by the way: The beleever, in the Promises hath the Lord God bearing him Company, and intertaining him with sutable and heart-strengthening discourses: The Promises are Gods speaking to the weary traveller and comforting them with good words: So that the Childe of God may listen to the Promises, and there hear what God is saying to his soul: and all the Promises being good words, and comfortable words, they carry nothing but Peace and Comfort in their bosome; they are nothing but good tidings. How sweet are thy words to my taste? (Said David Psal. 119: 103) *sweeter than honey to my mouth*; They are Gods Word, that he will performe Jer. 29: 10. 1 King. 8: 20. 2Chron6: 10. and therefore may the Beleever sing with David Psal. 56: v. 4. *In God will I praise his Word, In God I have put my trust, I will not fear, what flesh can do unto me.* They are the faithful and true sayings of God,

God, and worthy of all acceptation 2 Tim: 4: 8, 9. 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12.

5. A fight by faith of the Promises, as it putteth the soul to prayer; for hope that is begotten by faith in the Promise, encourageth to a calling on the Lord, over all difficulties, with earnestness and assiduity Psal. 119: 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word:* So it giveth great encouragement and boldness with confidence, in their prayer; when they know, how they stand upon the ground of a Promise, and can with humble boldness presse a performance of what the Lord hath promised. How sweet and comfortable was it to David, when he had this to say, *quicken me, and strengthen me, according to thy word* Psal. 119: v. 25, 28, 107, 116. 154. How comfortable then are the Promises unto a Beleever, upon this account, that upon the ground of the Promise he knowes, that he is allowed to seek what he wanteth and would have, from God, and he knowes God will not put him away from his door with a refusal, he will get the promise performed, either in the particular, or in that which is as good, or better; he knowes he may abide at Gods door, and in a manner refuse to come away, until he get his good answer. Yea he hath ground to plead the Promise,

Promise, in the hardest case he can be into, as Psal. 119, vers. 28. *My soul melteth away for heaviness, strengthen thou me, according to thy word.* Vers. 25. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me, according to thy word.* So Vers. 107. *I am afflicted very much, quicken me, O Lord, according to thy Word.*

6. A sight by faith of the Promises giveth a clear discovery of good & noble Purposes, that God hath; for they shew, what are the thoughts of his heart, what he mindeth to do, what are the Projects he hath in hand. Let matters look as they will, in the world, the Promises tell Beleevers, how matters shall go: and upon this account, they are upon the secrets of the Lord, and his secret is with them that fear him; for when the world, and the God of this world is raging against them, and threatening to destroy and ruine the whole Church, and all the Concernes of Christ; the Promises assure the Beleever, that God hath a far other Purpose, and that all that Hell can do, shall not get his Interest destroyed; they may well scourge and rub the rust off his people, they shall not be able to destroy. Who seeth not what a Life may hence be sucked?

7. Faith in the Promises will bring in a Life of hope unto the soul, under all discouragements,

ragments, Improbabilities, Yea and to sense, Impossibilities; *Abraham*, having the sure Promise of God, that he should be a Father of many Nations, beleev'd in hope against hope *Rom. 4: 18.* for faith seeth the faithfulness of God, which is great unto the Heavens, engaged; and that being engaged, faith seeth all the Power of God, to whom nothing is impossible, engaged also. So that though there were no appearance of an accomplishment; yea though all things should seem to say, there will be no accomplishment, faith will not give it over; but upon the Promises will conclude, that Miracles shall be wrought, and the course of nature overturned, ere the Promises of God faile, *Abraham* would neither reasone from his own body now dead, when he was an hundred yeers old, nor from the deadness of *Sarabs* Womb *Rom. 4: ver. 19.* Nor would *Sarah* consider her age to conceive, now gone, according to the course of Nature; but judg'd him faithful, who had Promised *Heb. 11: vers. 11.*

8. Even faith in Promises, that are not to be accomplished in our dayes, will yeeld a life: hence the Promises of the coming of the *Messiah*, and of the great and glo-

O rious

rious dayes of the Gospel, did afford a life of Joy, Comfort, and Hope to the Church of old. The beleiving Fathers died in faith, not having received the Promises, (that is, in their accomplishment) *but having seen them a far off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them*, Heb. 11: 13, 39. A man will plant an orchard, and rejoyce in the hope of the fruite it shall in due time yeeld, though his posterity, and not himself, shall reap that fruit. *By faith Abraham sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Countrey, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him, in the same promise* Heb. 11: 9.

9. Faith in the Promises can fortifie and strengthen a man against the lying suggestions of Satan, and all the discouraging insinuations of corrupt Nature, & carnal Reason; for when they would suggest, that the Lord were slack in performing his Promises, as having forgotten the same; faith will say, that *the Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering* 2 Pet. 3: 9. When Temptation would say, that the Lord had forgotten, and that now after so long delay, there were small, or no hope: Faith will answer, that God cannot forget. He remembered his holy Promise, Abraham his Ser-
vant,

vant, and he brought forth his people with Joy, and his chosen with gladness Psal. 105: 42, 43. And this came to passe, at the end of the foure hundred and thirtie years; in the self same day, it came to passe, that all the Hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt Exod. 12: ver. 41. So that the space of four hundreth and thirtie yeers, made not the Promise to be forgotten one day Nay, when unbeleef would say, It is to be feared, that after so long delay, and after so many revolutions, matters shall fall out otherwayes, than we expect according to the Promise; faith can answer, in the words of Joshua Josh. 21: 45. There failed not ought of any good thing, which the Lord had spoken unto the House of Israel, all came to passe; And all this notwithstanding of all the Changes, Revolutions, and Alterations in Affaires: So Josh 23: 14. ——— And ye know (these are the words of Joshua to the people) in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed, of all the good things, which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to passe unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Salomon had the same Observation, after all the Revolutions, that interveened betwixt the death of Joshua, and that very time 1 King. 8: 56. Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people, Israel, according to all that he promised.

there hath not failed one word of all his good Promises, which he promised by the hand of Moses his Servant. When temptation would be ready to discourage the poor soul, because of disappointments from yeer to yeer, and frustrations of their hope of the accomplishment; faith in the promises would put a good construction upon all these delays; and say, the Lord is awaiting the fit season, according to that *Esai. 30: 18*. And therefore will the Lord waite that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will the Lord be exalted that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of Judgment: Blessed are all they that wait for him. And would call to minde that word, in the end of *Esai. 60*. ——— I the Lord will hasten it in his time.

10. Faith in the Promises can afford a Life unto the Beleever, in the midst of all outward & manifest Discouragements, taken from their present case, and the present dispensation they are under: as for example (1.) When, notwithstanding of the Promises of outgate and deliverance, they see themselves put to wrestle with fire & water, with violent overflowings, and fiery flames; then faith can suck Comfort and Support out of that Promise *Esai. 43: 2*. When thou passest thorow the waters, I will be with thee; and thorow the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;

thee: When thou walkest thorow the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (2.) When notwithstanding of the Promises of upholding, they finde they cannot stand, temptations sometime prevaieth, and they are overcome, which is indeed a most discouraging thing; faith can suck life and comfort out of another Promise, such as that *Psal. 37: 24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth with his hand.* (3.) When they are scattered and banished from the Land, that they expected to have dwelt constantly in; faith can draw support out of that Promise *Ezek. 11: 16. Therefore say, thus saith the Lord God, although I have cast them far off among the Heathen, and although I have scattered them among the Countreys; yet will I be to them, as a little Sanctuary, in the Countreys, where they shall come.* (4.) When in stead of the expected Delivery, Affliction and Persecution continueth and increaseth; faith can run to that Promise *Mark 10: 30. and draw Life from it, But he shall receive an hundred fold, now in this time — with persecutions.* (5.) When all is destroyed in appearance, or like to be destroyed, and there is no outgate, nor escaping; faith will feed upon a remnant, and feast upon a crumb; and suck at these Promises and

the like Esai. 28: 5. In that day, shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people, Esai. 11: 11, 12. and it shall come to passe in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand againe, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Sbinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an ensigne for the Nations, and shall Assemble the out-casts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the Earth, And the like Jerem. 23: vers. 3. and 31: 7, 8. Ezek. 6: 8. and 14. 22. Mica. 2: 12. Zech. 8: 12. (6.) When, even as to the remnant, there may be but small hopes, because of the great feares, that they shall prove no better than the rest; faith can look to other comfortable Promises, & feed upon them; such as these Esai. 10: 20, 21. And it shall come to passe, in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the House of Jacob, shall no more againe stay upon him that smote them: But shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. Ezek. 7: 16. But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the Mountains like doves of the Valleyes, all of them

them mourning, e'ery one for his iniquity Zeph. 3: 12, 13. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people; and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.

So that we see, the Treasure of the Promises is rich and lairge; and faith hath a faire field to feed upon; so that be the Beleevers case, or the case of the Church, what it will, faith can get some Promise or other, to make a feast of; and can suck Support, Comfort, Strength, and Ground of Hope, and of Waiting with patience the refrom.

But here it will be said, There is one thing, that marreth the Comfort of all these grounds, and putteth us from sucking Consolation from them, in behalfe of the Church; and that is, the Conscience of guilt lying on, and unrepented of; which saith, there is no hope: If we were a penitent people, turning to the Lord with all our heart, and repenting of the evil of our wayes, then there were some hope: that his wrath should be turned from us, and his afflicting hand taken off us, and that he would vifte us with Salvation, & command deliverance for us: But when it is not thus with us, what can we make of the Promises?

In answer to this, I shall grant

1. That it is true, the Lord doth not afflict the Children of men willingly, but his rods and scourges on a Land, are for their iniquities; *For our iniquities be hath sold, and for our transgressions is our mother put away* Esai. 50: 1. And it is iniquitie, that separateth betwixt us and our God, and our sinnes have hid his face from us Esai. 59: 2. Upon this account therefore, we must justifie the Lord in all that he doth, and blame ourselves for all, seeing the procuring cause is found with us.

2. It is also true, that God useth sometimes to double and redouble, yea and multiply his strokes upon an impenitent people, who do not repent, and will not change their wayes; He will punish seven times more, and againe seven times more, yea and a third time, and a fourth time *Levit. 26: 18, 21, 24, 28.* He will send sore rods, and yet his anger will not be turned away, but his hand be stretched out still *Esai. 5: vers. 25. and 9: 11, 17, 21. and 10: 4.*

3. It is likewise undeniable, that the Prophets of old did, in the Name of the Lord, call upon the People to repent of the wickedness of their hearts and wayes, and to turn from their abominations, that Gods anger might be removed, and his rod taken off

off them; as is clear out of their Prophecies.

4. It is likewise a truth, that people under the rode are called to search out their iniquities with seriousness, and in all haste to run to the blood of Christ, that they may be washen away; and should look upon this course, as the shortest cut unto a delivery. They should hear the voice of the rode, and who it is that hath appointed the same, that their delivery; when it cometh, may prove a sanctified delivery indeed, according to the grounds of the word,

Yet, though we should not see such a frame following the rode, it will not be saife peremptorily to conclude, that there will be no outgate or delivery from the calamity: because God, the great and absolute Sovereigne, hath his own special Acts of Sovereignty, whereby he sheweth himself Gracious, because he will be gracious. And therefore, though upon the one hand we should not abuse the Sovereigne grace of God, and continue in our sin, because the Lord can act thus in a soveraigne manner; so upon the other hand (which is the end for which I mention this) his people, though not satisfied with themselves, or with the Universality of the Church, wherein they live, as to Godly Sorrow, Repentance and Amendement, but would fain

see more and more of that, yet should not despond, and say there is no hope, and absolutely and peremptorily conclude there will be no outgate; for this were to limite the Holy One of Israel. Therefore that we may speak something to the Objection, and shew, how notwithstanding of the want of that measure of Sorrow for sin, and Amendement of Wayes, which is called and wished for, at their hands, who are under the Rod of God; yet the matter is not desperate; we shall propose these few Particulars to Consideration.

I. We finde several times, that God hath delivered out of trouble and distress an unhumbled and impenitent people; and that for his own Names sake, and for his Truth and Covenants sake; thou, know nothing in the Persons delivered could have promised such a thing; yea when their carriage and disposition might have provoked God, to have smitten yet seven times more; yet the Lord hath been pleased to declare, and give a manifest proof of his Sovereignty: Not to instance the people of Israel, when the Lord sent *Moses* to deliver them out of *Egypt*, amongst whom little of this frame is very manifest; we have several clear instances hereof in the word,

word. See Psal. 78. the frame of that people was not good, when it is said of them *Vers. 36. they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues. V. 37. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant: And yet in the following Vers. 38. it is said, But he being full of Compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. Vers. 39. For he remembered they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not againe.* Here is one instance, that hath severals in its bosome. So Psal. 106: 7, 8. It is said, *Our Fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the Sea, at the red Sea.* And what came of this? It is added, *Nevertheless he saved them for his names sake, that he might make his mighty Power to be known.* So Vers. 43, 44, 45. *Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their Counsels, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their Afflictions, when he heard their cry. And he remembered for them his Covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.* The like we finde Esai. 48. where the house of Jacob are described to

be such, as made mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in-righteousness *vers.* 1. They were obstinate, and their neck as an yron sinew, and their brow brasse *vers.* 4. the Lord knew, that they would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressour from the Womb. *Vers.* 8. And yet with amazement we may see what followeth *vers.* 9, 10, 11. *For my names sake will I deferre mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off: Behold! I have refined thee but not with Silver, I have chosen thee in the furnace of Affliction: For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it, for how should my name be polluted, and I will not give my glory to another.* Moreover *Ezek.* 20. there is a large processe drawn up against that people, and the Lord there sheweth, how the ir carriage was such as did provoke him many a time, to threaten their destruction; and when nothing appeared in them, but what in Justice might have brought-on the threatned Destruction; yet he saith, he wrought for his names sake, *Vers.* 9. And this was not once, nor twice, but three several times, as *Vers.* 9, 14, 22. Whence we see, that the Lord oftentimes followed this way of Sovereignty, and did

did not waite upon their Repentance; and sincere amendment; but in stade of pleading with them, according to Justice, he wrought deliverance for his own names sake. In like manner, we see *Eesai. 59.* a large catalogue of sinnes reckoned up from the beginning to *Vers. 16.* and it might have been thought, that at the end of such a summe, there should have been a black roll of judgments set down: And yet we see some far other thing expressed. *And he saw, that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessour; therefore his own arme brought salvation, and his righteousness it sustained him.* Is not this wonderful, that when there was not so much as a man, almost to count upon, to intercede for delivery, yet he should bring about their Salvation?

2. Yea, we finde the Lord not only taking such a course, as this, *to wit,* of delivering an unhumbled and unprepared people; but also we finde him giving the reason of his so dealing; and that such a reason too, as may be a ground of hope, for time coming, so far at least, as not to conclude the case desperate. See for this *Eesai. 57: vers. 16, 17, 18, 19.* For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwaye

wroth: For the spirit should fail before me, and the souls I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his wayes, and will heal him, I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I creat the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is neer, saith the Lord; and I will heal him. Here is a special act of Sovereigne grace; when he seeth his people brought so low, that unless he take such a soveraigne way of mercy, they are ruined; he saw here that notwithstanding of his wrath and indignation kindled against them, they were not the better, but went on forwardly in the way of their own heart, so that if he had dealt with them, according to their wayes; he should have contended for ever, and have been alwayes wroth, and thereby at length have brought them to nothing. Wherefore, seing the same God liveth, and is as transcendent in his Mercy and Goodness, as ever; we may not peremptorily conclude, that He will never any more act after such a Royal Prerogative. We saw Esai. 59: ver. 16. from what an antecedent, he drew a very comfort-

fortable consequent. The antecedent, *He saw that there was no man, &c.* will oft occur: And dar we say that the Sovereignty of grace cannot make the like consequent, as there followeth, *Therefore his own arme brought salvation?* See also *Psalm 103: vers. 13, 14. 2 King. 14: ver. 26, 27.*

3. We finde moreover, the people of God, notwithstanding of guilt standing in the way, comforting themselves in the hope of an outgate, upon the account of Gods being merciful and gracious *Ps. 103: ver. 8, 9. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and will not alwayes chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever:* And this was, notwithstanding that sin and guilt appeared: For it is added, *he dealeth not with us, (as the words may be read in the present time) after our finnes; nor rewardeth us after our iniquities.* So *Lam. 3. Jeremiah* will have the people, in the midst of their bitter lamentations, conceiving some hope, saying *vers. 26. It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly waite for the Salvation of the Lord.* And why so? Among other grounds, he giveth this *vers. 31, 32. for the Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grieve, yet*
with

will be have Compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies. Now Compassion and tender Mercies in God respect sin in his people; and presuppose it. So that we see, how, notwithstanding of sin standing in the way, there is hope, that God will not cast off for ever, but will have Compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies.

4. We finde the people of God praying for a delivery, notwithstanding that guilt stood in their view *Jer. 14.* When there was an heaue stroke of famine upon the land, *Jeremiah* with the Church prayed, that God would take away that stroke: and though guilt appeared, and, as it were, stared them in the face, yet they gave not over the matter, but went on notwithstanding, saying, O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy names sake. *Vers. 7.* They take with sin, and notwithstanding thereof presse their desire, upon the account of God's Name, So *Daniel Chap. 9.* when he is praying for deliverance out of the Captivity, sin and guilt appeareth; yet it doth not stop his mouth, but he acknowledgeth the same, at great length *Vers. 5, 6, 7, 10, 11.* and yet

CHAP. IX. The Promises. 329

yet for all that preſſeth for delivery *V. 16, 17, 18, 19.* Yea we finde (and that is very remarkable) *Exra*, in his prayer *Ch. 9.* hath nothing but acknowledgment of ſin, and of the aggravations of ſin, the Conſideration of which ſo filleth him with ſhame and confuſion of face, that he cannot preſent one expreſſe and explicate petition; and yet the very drift of his Addreſs, and the ſcope he levelled at, in his Confession, was that the people might finde grace in the eyes of the Lord, and that he would not deſtroy them, notwithstanding of their many and new Provocations.

5. God can, and ſometime doth prevent the Repentance of his people with temporal deliverances. Though ordinarily, when the Lord cometh in love, he uſeth to bleſſe his people with a new frame of Spirit, and then commandeth deliverance for them: Yet ſometimes he will take another courſe, and cauſe temporal deliverance uſher-in Repentance. There are ſome remarkable Paſſages, which cleare this; ſuch as *Ezek. 16: 60, 61, 62, 63.* The Lord had been, from the beginning of the *Chapter*, aggraiving, many ſeveral wayes, the grievous ſins and provocations.

vocations of that people, and yet here bespeaketh them thus, though nothing of their amendment appeared. *Never the less, I will remember my Covenant with thee ——— then thou shalt remember thy wayes, and be ashamed, and againe verj. 62, 63. and I will establisth my Covenant with thee ——— that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done.* Intimating that he would first be pacified toward them, and turn away his wrath, and lay by the rod (the effect thereof) and then they would remember and be confounded, and never open their mouth any more, because of their frame. So Ezek. 20: 41, 42, 43, He tels them, that he would bring them home to the land of Israel, and gather them out of the Countries, where they had been scattered: And then addeth, *And there shall ye remember your wayes, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight; for all your evils, that you have committed.* And further Vers. 44. and ye shall know, that I ~~am~~ the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my names sake, not according to your wicked wayes, nor according to your corrupt doings.

And

And thus he promiseth to usher-in Godly Sorrow, Shame and Repentance, with their outward delivery from their exile. A third place we have Ezek. 36: 24, 25, 26. *For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all Countreyes, and will bring you into your own land. And what followeth thereupon? Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean — a new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you &c.*

6. It is also considerable, that when the Lord promiseth deliverance to his people, and standeth up, as it were to darken the accomplishment of the Promise, or to weaken the hopes and expectation of his people, the Lord also addeth and annexeth another promise, for removing of this ground of scruple out of the mindes of his people: a pregnant passage to this purpose we have Esai. 43. In that and in the preceeding Chapter, the Lord is holding forth many gracious promises unto his people, and among the rest Vers. 5. he saith *I will bring thee out from the East, and gather thee from the West. And Vers. 6. I will say to the North, give up, and to the South, keep not back; bring my Sonnes from far, and my Daughters from the ends of the*

the earth. And againe Vers. 14. Thus saith the Lord our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, for your sakes, have I sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their Nobles &c. But now how shall Israel get this beleaved, (for it was yet to be, howbeit in part expressed, as past to hold forth its certainty) seeing there is so much guilt in the way, especially when the Lord is taking notice of the same, and is laying it out before them, as we see he doth Vers. 22, 23, 24? Well, the Lord addeth a word Vers. 25. to roll that out of the way, saying, I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy finnes.

Whence we see, that even in this bare moor, when matters look so hopeless, faith can hold a feast, and sing, and beleve in hope against hope, and thereby keep up the head and heart of a poor soul, when it is like to sinck.

CHAP. X.

CONSIDERATION V.

Taken from *former Experiences.*

THere is another particular, that faith can draw much life from, in an evil day, whether in reference to beleivers themselves in particular, or in reference to the oppressed Church of Christ; and that is, the former Experiences, they, or the Church have meet with, of the Lords gracious appearing for them: yea the experiences of the Church, or of particular beleivers, in former times, can be matter for faith to feed upon; and can afford matter of hope; seing God, who is unchangeable, the same in all Generations, is as mighty and able now to deliver, as ever He was in former Ages; and as powerful to deliver out of the Seventh Trouble, as he was to deliver out of the Six Preceeding Job. 5: 19. So long then as the Lords Hand is not shortned, that he cannot save, his people need not be altogether out of hope of a delivery. It is
certaine

certaine, that there is no want of the experiences of the Lords delivering of his people; so that if particular beleivers want experiences of their owne, they have the experiences of other Saints, and of the Church of God, in former Ages; and these may be improven for the strengthening of their hope. and for encouraging of them, under Affliction.

That it may appear, that former Experiences, whether of others, or our own, may and ought to be improven by beleivers, whether in behalfe of themselves, or of the Church, for keeping their hearts from sincking under discouragement, and for preserving them from fainting and hopeless despondency; we shall *first* propose some Particulars to cleare the same: & *next* more particularly shew, how faith may improve this ground, for the ends mentioned.

As to the *first*, let these things be considered.

I. Christ, as typified by David Psal. 22. we finde, is improving the Experiences of others, for the strengthening of his faith and hope; and therefore *vers.* 4, 5. he saith, *Our fathers trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered, &c.* He is addressing himself un-

CHAP. X. Former Experiences. 335

to the Father, in the type, and supplicating for delivery; and hath the hope and expectation to be heard, upon this, among other grounds; Thou diddest deliver our fathers, and why not me also? Shall I then account my case and condition desperate, seeing thou livest, who didst deliver our fathers, when they were in trouble? From which instance we see a clear warrant, for our improving the experiences of others, for the strengthening of our faith and hope, in an evil day: At least, so long, as we have these to look to, we have no cause to account our case desperat, and irremediable.

2 We have the practice of the Saints, going before us, in this, and casting us a Copie: When they were in trouble, they, called to mind the former proofs they had of Gods power and good will, in delivering themselves out of former troubles; and the experiences of other Saints before them. So David 1 Sam. 17:37. *The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear: he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistim.* So the church, while in a sad condition Psal. 74: 12, 13, 14, 15. looketh back to the dayes of old, wherein God was her King, working salvation in the midst of the earth: And particularly they call

call to minde his wonderful works, in delivering of them from the Egyptians, and how he did divide the Sea, by his strength, and broke the heads of the dragons &c. meaning *Pharaoh* the King of Egypt, who is called a dragon, Ezek. 29: 4. So *Esaï.* 25. there is a comfortable conclusion vers 5. That God would bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place, even the heat, with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. But upon what premisses is this built? See vers 4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to thee needy, in his distress, a refuge from the storme, and a shadow from the heat &c. That which God had proven himself to be, in former times, gave ground to conclude, he would prove the same againe. Be therefore our condition what it will, we may do, as David did *Psal.* 119: 52. I remembered thy judgements of old, O Lord, and have comforted my self. We may call to mind the Lord's judgments, executed upon Enemies, and there upon comfort our selves in hope. See *Psal.* 31: 7, 8, 9. and many other passages, which might be adduced to this end.

3. We finde *David* exhorting other saints, to rejoyce in the Lord, upon deliveries received by himself; intimating thereby,

CHAP. X. Former Experiences, 337.

by, that these deliveries were of common Concernment to all; and so, in some respect, Mercies and Deliveries to all, all Beleevers having one maine interest; and so might be improven for the Support, Comfort and Joy of their souls, in the like case. So Psal. 34: 3. *O magnifie the Lord, and let us exalt his name together.* And why? Vers. 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me; and delivered me from all my feares.* Vers. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* So that Davids delivery was of Concernment to all; and such, as might encourage them to call upon the same God, in hope and confidence to be heard, as David was: And therefore Ps. 31. when he had told how God had shewed him his marvellous kindness, in a strongc is ie, he exhorteth all Saints V. last, to be of good courage, intimating that the favour and kindness he had met with, might be ground of hope for them, in the like case, and, as it were, a pledge, that God will strengthen their hearts.

4 We finde the great sin, that was charged upon the people of Israel, in the wilderness, was their forgetting the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands; and that after he had wonderfully

P

deli.

delivered them out of one strait, and by that wonderful deliverance had called them to trust in him, in all time coming, and not to fainte, through misbeleefe, when new difficulties appeared: Yet for all that, when a new trial came, they had as much forgotten, or knew as little by faith, to draw strength, comfort and hope therefrom, as if they had never seen any such thing, all their dayes. Hence it is charged upon them *Psal. 78: 11. They forgot his works, and his wonders, that he had shewed them.* And againe *Vers. 17.* notwithstanding of all he did for them, they *sinned yet more against him.* And *Vers. 18, 19. They tempted God, in their hearts, by asking meate for their lust.* And they *spake against God, and said, can God furnish a table in the wildernes?* so also it is againe laid to their charge *Vers. 32. and 41.* Seing then this was their great sin, which provoked the Lord highly against them, it is past all doubt, that the Lord alloweth, yea and commandeth his people, to reflect upon bygone passages of the Lord's Providence about them, or about others of the Lord's people, & thereupon to build their faith & hope, in their particular strait & difficulty, or in the difficulty the Church is meeting with.

5. We finde the Lord commanding his people the use of such meanes, as might keep the posterity in mind of his memorable and wonderful acts: And to what end, but that the posterity might have hope, when they did meet with the like trials, and in hope might betake themselves to the same God, who had wrought so wonderfully before. This we have clearly set down *Psa^l. 78: 4, 5, 6, 7.* And the end is also declared *Vers. 7. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.* *Ver. 8. And might not be, as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation &c.* Parents are obliged to acquaint their Children with the works of the Lord, in delivering of them; that so his great works of mercy may be kept in memory from generation to generation, to the end, that all might hope in God, when new straits came. For this subordinat end, did the Lord institute the Ordinance of the Passover, as we see *Exod. 12: 26, 27.* So was the heap of stones erected by *Josua*, when the people came thorow Jordan *Josb. 4: 6, 7.* And this was not barely to keep these passages in mind, but rather that they might be so remembered as to

be improven, and that God's power might not be againe questioned, but confided in, when any new difficulty occurred.

6. We finde *David* appointing several of those *Psalmes*, in which he mentioneth the Lord's goodness, in delivering him out of his troubles, unto the chiefe finger, that is, to be made use of by the Church, for her edification, that when she or any of her members were in trouble, they might call to mind, and make use of *David's* experiences, for their comfort and support. Thus we see, he directed the 18. *Psalm*, in which there is a summe of Gods special mercies to him recorded: so the 31, 40, and 46. and several other *Psalmes*, wherein his experiences are recorded.

7. It is not for nought, that we have so many experiences of the Saints and Church of God of old, recorded in Scripture, and laid before us. This must be, that we may take notice of these several passages, and make a good use of them; even draw strength to our faith, and hope therefrom, when we or the Church are in the like difficulties. *Paul* tells us *Rom. 15* v. 4. That *what soever things were written a*

fore

CHAP. X. Former Experiences. 341

fore time, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope: and this will hold particularly true of the passages of God's deliverances, wrought in and for his Church, which are recorded, that we through patience and comfort of these, might have hope.

Thus have we cleared, how former experiences, whether our own, or of others, and particularly those that are recorded in Scripture, are of use, to bear up the hearts of, and to yeeld ground of hope and comfort unto the Children of God, in their particular distresses, and hazards: let us now see, in the *next* place, what grounds of Hope, and Confidence lye in these Experiences, to the end, we may see more particularly, how they ought to be improven, that faith may suck life and strength therefrom, in an evil time.

I. We finde the Church and people of God, in their new straits and difficulties, shenghtening their faith, hope and confidence, in their addressses to God, by calling to minde the notable passages of Gods Providence, about them or their forefathers, in former times. So doth *Nehemiah*

miah Chap. 1. when he is wrestling with God, in behalf of *Jerusalem*, that was waste, and desolate: among other arguments, he maketh use of this *vers. 10.* Now these are thy Servants, and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand: But more fully *Chap. 9.* When he is humbling himself before the Lord, and deprecating wrath, he useth this argument at large *vers. 9.* And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the red sea. *vers. 10.* And shewedst signes and wonders upon Pharaoh, and all his Servants ——— *Vers 11.* And thou didst divide the sea before them, &c. So *vers. 12, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22.* So the Church taketh this same course *Psal. 44: vers. 1, 2, 3.* They usher-in their prayer with that consideration, *we have heard with our eares, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their dayes, in the times of old &c.* So *Psal. 74: 2.* Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed &c. So *Psal. 80: 8, 9.* Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt &c. Upon this same ground, did *Moses* plead with God, when his wrath was kindled against his people, at several occasions. Faith
seeth

seeth here ground of comfort and encouragement; for faith perceiveth here, how God hath formerly shown himself in the behalfe of his people, manifesting his power for them, in delivering them out of former troubles, and in bringing them the length, they are now at.

2. Faith, upon God's former working in the behalfe of his people, seeth, some kinde of obligation (to speak so) upon the Lord, to go on, and do yet more for them, especially when the Lord's former appearances, in their behalfe, have been such, as did speak out to all, that the Lord did owne them, as his peculiar people, in a singular manner; for faith readeth thereupon a purpose that God had to bring them a further length, seeing the works of the Lord are perfect. Thus Moses did plead, in the behalfe of the people *Exod. 23: 11. And Moses besought the Lord, his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hote against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, with great power, and with a great hand.* This will be further clear from these two particulars. (1.) That when once God hath wrought some signal delivery for his people, and hath

saved them by his strong hand, and his out-
 stretched arme, his Name standeth en-
 gaged to appear for them againe & againe,
 untill they get a bill of divorce, and
 make it manifest before all the world, that
 he owneth them no more for his people.
 Hence it is, that Joshua did plead thus with
 the Lord Cap. 7: 8, 1. *Oh, Lord, what
 shall I say, when Israel turneth their back be-
 fore their enemies: for the Canaanites and all
 the Inhabitants of the Land shall hear of it
 ——— And what wilt thou do unto thy great
 name?* He saw, that God's great name
 was engaged, in the sight of the nations,
 and that a reproach would be brought up
 against that name by the wicked world, if
 now, after the Lord had done so much
 for them, and brought them even within
 the Land of Canaan, he would not
 throughe their possessing of it (2) The Lord
 himself upon consideration of this doth
 appeare for his people, when all ground
 of hope else faileth Esai 63: 11, 12, 13, 14.
*Then he remembered the dayes of old, Moses,
 and his people, saying, where is he, that brought
 them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his
 flock ——— That led them by the right
 hand of Moses, with his glorious arme, divid-
 ing the water before them, to make himself an
 ever-*

CHAP. X. Former Experiences 345

everlasting name, that led them thorow the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble &c. This several conceive (and it seemeth most probable) to be spoken by God himself, remembering what He had done of old; and, upon the consideration thereof, resolving to worke new deliverances for them. God is brought-in here by the Prophet disputing (as it were) with himself about the matter, and saying (as it were) how can it be, that I should forsake them now, and refuse to deliver them in their straits, seing formerly I have wrought so much for them, and have manifested my power so much in their behalfe? Not far unlike is that reasoning of the Lord with himself *Hos. 11: 8.* *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee, as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together: And after this reasoning, the resolution is Vers. 9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not returne to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man, the holy one, in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the city: And whence did all this flow? See Vers. 1, 3, 4. When Israel was a Childe, then I loved him*

I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their armes — I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love &c. the Lord appeared for them of old, in his love, pity, mercy and kindness; and upon this account, he could not now, when deliberating with himself what to do, resolve to destroy them. There must then, sure, be some great thing in this, that God should so take notice of his former manifestations of power and good will, toward a people, as to be moved (as it were) by the consideration thereof, to stretch forth his arme of new, and to appeare againe, in their behalfe.

3. If new provocations and abused mercies should say, the Lord will not alwayes have his name taken in vaine, and his works of power and grace abused; and therefore after his former appearances have been misimproven, the Lord will forbear to appear any more: Yet faith, though it will readily grant, that the Lord may do so, & that it were but righteous if he should do so, will notwithstanding plead former experiences, knowing that there was in them, from the beginning, sufficient cause, why the Lord should have made no appearances for them; and howbeit He knew, what

CHAP. X. Former Experiences. 347

what they would do, yet He was pleased to work for them then, for his namesake, & make his power known, and his glory manifest: Faith will say, may not the Lord do so yet for the glory of his free grace? Did he work for a sinful people before, and is it not possible, that he may do so again? See how Moses argueth Numb. 14: 14. *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even untill now.*

4. Faith can draw noble comfort from former experiences, upon this account, that if the Lord should forbear any more to appeare in the behalfe of a people, for whom he hath done great things, in the sight of the nations. Enemies would take occasion therefrom, to blaspheme the Lord and his work; and that upon a double account. (1.) The enemies would put a bad and blasphemous construction upon all that God had done formerly, and say, it was not the Lord, it was not the work of the Lord, but a work of wickedness and of Satan; and their former deliverances were not the deliverance of God, acting and appearing as their God by covenant, and seeking their good and advantage; but

only Acts of Common Providence; that Enemies to God may meet with: And this giveth noble advantage to faith, in pleading with God, as we see in that noble wrestler Moses Exod. 32: 11, 12. He besought the Lord, and said, *why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people &c.* and then addeth, *wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for mischief did he bring them out, and slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth!* He saw, that the mouthes of the adversaries would be opened, and that they would speak blasphemously of God, of his purposes, and of his works; and say, that God intended mischief against them, and nothing else; and so was their Enemy, and not their friend, and a God in covenant with them: And therefore he laith out this before the Lord; and pleadeth with the Lord, upon this account: Faith then can suek life out of this consideration. And (2.) The Enemies, upon God's forbearing to go on in his apperances for his people, would think and say, He were a God, that were not able to deliver, and throughe and perfect his work, but that his power were gone and dried up: And thus the blessed name of the Lord would be blasphemous.

CHAP. X. Former Experiences. 349

blasphemed. Therefore we finde the fore-mentioned noble wrestler, Moses, pleading upon this ground with the Lord Numb. 14: 13, 14, 15, 16. And Moses said unto the Lord; Then the Egyptians shall hear; for thou broughtest up thy people in thy might from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this Land; for they have heard, that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time, in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the Nations, which have heard the fame of thee, will speak saying, because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the Land, which he swear unto them, therefore he hath slaine them in the wilderness. Thus the Enemy would have said, that God had Interpretized what he was not able to accomplish, & that he had laid the foundation, but was not able to put on the copestone: we finde both these shortly set down Deut. 9: 26. 28. And I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people ——— left the Land, whence thou broughtest us out; say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the Land, which he promised them; (and because he hated them, he hath brought

brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

5. It may contribute to the clearing of this, to consider, that upon the account, that God hath done so much for his people, we finde him pressing several acts of kindness to be done unto them, as *Levit. 25: 39, 40, 41.* He would not have the poor among them handled as slaves, but as Servants, or as Sojourners, and that unto the year of jubilee, and then they were to be sent away free: And this is pressed upon this ground *vers 42. For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, they shall not be sold as bond-men. Vers 42. Thou shalt not rule over them with rigour, but shalt feare thy God.* So againe, he concludeth *vers last, for unto me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the Land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.*

6. Faith can get such a view of what is wrapped up, in the former appearances of the Lord for his people, that the soul is in case to give, as it were, a defiance unto all trouble, that can follow. So *Psal. 118: 5.* The Psalmist saith, *I called upon the Lord, in distress; the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.* This was a refresh-

CHAP. X. Former Experiences. 351

freshful experiment: And what saith he next upon this? *Vers. 6. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear, what man can do unto me. The like we finde Psal. 37: 1, 2, 3. The Lord is my light and my Salvation, said the Psalmist, whom shall I feare? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid*
When the wicked, even mine Enemies and my foes, came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me; my heart should not feare, though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. He remembered, what God had been unto him, and had done for him, and how he made his Enemies stumble and fall, when they came against him, with their greatest fury and cruelty, and therefore, in a manner triumpheth over all trouble, as beyond its reach and fear. So doth the Church cry out *Psal. 44: 2, 3. I will not fear, though the earth be removed &c.* And what is the ground of such high expressions? God (saith she) is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. How was this known? saith drew this out of former experiences *Vers. 6, 7. The heathen raged, the Kingdomes were moved; He uttered his voice, the Earth melted. And againe Vers. 8, 9. He made desolations in the earth.*

Thus

Thus we see what a life of peace, joy, hope and consolation faith can draw, in an evil time, from former experiences; these giving ground for such inferences, as faith can improve to great advantage, in wrestling with the Lord by prayer, as we have seen, and these being registred, and to be remembered, for this end that we, through a right improvment of them, might have comfort, and ground sufficient, not to inferre despondingly, our case is desperat and forlorne, and that it is in vaine to waite any more upon the Lord; but on the contrary, that there is yet hope in Israel, because there is a Phisician there, as skilful and able to helpe, as ever; and there is balme in Gilead: and notwithstanding of objections, that might cause discouragement and despondency; yet faith, upon this consideration, can keep up the head in hope, and cause the soul quietly and patiently to waite; seing none can say, that the arme of the Lord is shortned; and it may be, the Lord magnifie the riches of his free grace, in saving a sinful, unworthie people, out of the Seventh trouble, as well as he did, when he delivered them out of Six foregoing troubles. However, the soul by faith looking to this ground, may

CHAP. XI. It is God's quarrel. 353

may be quieted, and even thus the soul may enjoy a sweet life; while as the giving way unto temptation, saying, that because the Lord helpeth not now, in this new trial, all his former appearances and works of that kind have been but delusions, or the meer works of men, is a short cut to undoe all, and plunge the soul in a fearful desperat despondency, whereby both hope shall be more dreadfully cut off, and the present case of the soul much more distempered; yea and the soul put in a readiness to turn with the times, and to side with the workers of iniquity.

CHAP. XI.

CONSIDERATION VI.

Taken from this, that the
quarrel and *controversie* is
the Lord's, and that it is
for *his sake* they suffer.

WE proceed to mention another field,
where faith will finde food and life,
in

in an evil time, and that is, the Lord's interest in the controversie, or cause for which the people of God, are oftentimes put to suffer; The quarrell being the Lord's, in a manner, more than theirs, giveth ground for faith to hope, and to rejoyce in hope; many a time it is seen, that what the Godly are put to suffer, at the hands of the wicked, is meerly upon the account of their adhering to the truth, and cleaving unto the Lord, and all his interests, and not upon the account of any personal injuries, which they have done unto any of these Enemies; as the ground-hatred, the rise and spring of all the persecution, which his people meet with, is upon the account of their relation to God, and of their bearing his image, and looking like his friends and followers. This being so manifest and clear both from Scripture, and the experience of his Church and people, in all ages, we need not spend words in confirming of it, or in clearing up the grounds thereof: Our purpose leadeth us to shew, what improvement faith can and may make of this Consideration, in order to attaining of a life, in an evil and sad time: In order

CHAP. XI. It is God's quarrel. 355

der to which, we would premit these two things.

I. That we finde the Church, and people of God, improving this argument in their addressses to God *Psal. 44: 22. Yes for thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted, as sheep for the slaughter. Psal. 69: ver. 7. Because for thy sake, I have born reproach: shame hath covered my face. So doth Jeremie Jer. 15: 15. ——— Know that for thy sake, I have suffered rebuke.* The argument used by *Joshua*, when he was sore distressed, because of the discomfiture the people got before *Ai*, and cryed out, *what wilt thou do unto thy great name,* had this import; for they were following the Lords call, in going-in to possesse that Land, that had been promised by oath and covenant unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob their posterity; and therein they had met with opposition, and a shamful discomfiture, contrare to their expectations; whereupon he rolleth the matter over upon God, and taketh him up, as party, in the quarrel, and looketh upon the Enemies, as engaged as well against Him, who was the Captaine of their host, and was to go before them, as against them. So *Psal 74.* The Church

rec.

reckoneth up the wrongs, which were done against them, as done against the Lord, and therefore saith: *The Enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations Ver. 4. They have cast fire into thy Sanctuary, they have defiled the dwelling place of thy name to the ground. Ver. 7. They have brunt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land Ver. 8. and againe Ver. 22. 23. she sendeth up her petitions, in these termes. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause, remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee dayly: forget not the voice of thine Enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually. So Psal. 79: 1, 2. O God, the Heavens are come into thine Inheritance, thy holy temple have they defiled. — The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowles of the heaven: The flesh of thy Saints unto the beasts of the earth &c. So Psal. 83: ver. 2. Thine Enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. Vers. 5. For they have consulted together with one consent, they are confederat against thee.*

2. We finde the Lord looking upon himself, as interested in the matter, and as concerned in the quarrel, and there-upon engaging to take course with Enemies

CHAP. XI. It is God's quarrel, 357

mies, because of his Name, that otherwise might suffer *Eesai. 48: 11*. And therefore he will not have his people, in whom he is concerned, alwayes suffering, at the hands of Enemies. *Eesai, 52: ver. 5, 6*. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought, they that rule over them make them to howle, and my name continually every day is blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I: and if the Lord thinketh himself concerned, when his people are suffering at the hands of Enemies, though Enemies are not persecuting them upon the account of their adhering to the Lord, and Cause; how much more, will He think himself interested in their sufferings, when they are pressed with them purely for his sake, & because they are adhering to Him, and to His Truth?

Let us now see particularly what improvement faith can make of this, and what sap and life it can draw out of it.

I. God being interested in the quarrel, faith seeth and saith, that He is an Adversarie to the adversaries, and not the poor weak people alone; and that Enemies
haye

have to do with the great God, as their party; and faith can easily draw from this, a ground of hope, that all will be well, seing stronger is He, who is with them, than all who are against them. *Asa* upon this ground did plead well with God 2 *Chron.* 14: 11. ——— O Lord, (saith he) *thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.* He took up God, as a party against those *Ethiopians*, that were come against him, and thereupon got ground to faith to stand upon, when he was sending up his request. And what came of it? The Lord smote the *Ethiopians* before *Asa* v. 12 and they fled, though an host of a Thousand Thousand, and three hundred charrets vers. 9.

2. Faith seeth, and rationally inferreth, That if the quarrel be God's, it will concerne Him and his glory, to see to his own interest, and to appeare for his own cause: faith will see Him ingadged to arise and plead his owne cause. *Joash* said of *Baal* *Judg.* 6: 31. *If Baal be a God, let him plead for himself, because we hath thrown down his altar.* And seing (saith faith) our God is a God, and the only true God, he will undoubtedly plead for himself. When that railing letter came
to

CHAP. XI. It is God's quarrel. 359

to *Hezekiah's* hands, he spreadeth it before Lord, and taketh up God, as party concerned in the busines, and therefore saith, that the man came to reproach the living God. And accordingly God interested himself, as a party, *2 King. 19: vers. 27, 28. Esai 37: 28, 29.* And said by the Prophet *Esai*, *I know thine abode and thy going out, and thy comming in, and thy rage against me; because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook into thy nose, and my bridle into thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way, by which thou camest.*

3. Faith can hence inferre, that certainly the Lord will appear, and plead his own cause, in his own due time, & determine in the behalfe of truth; and the cause in question being such, as neerly concerneth himself, and his own glory, no doubt he will arise for it, saith faith. If a cause come before a righteous judge, he will decide for truth; and if it concerne himself, there is more ground of hope, that the decision will be in truths favours: Now God is the righteous judge, and to him and to his determination do his people appeal, and cry to him to plead their cause *Psal. 35: 1. and 43: 1. and 119: 154.*

1 Sam. 24:

1 Sam. 24: 15. Psal. 35: v. 23. And their cause he will plead Jer. 50: 34. Ps. 140: 12. Esai 51: 22. And when faith seeth, that the Lord is not only engaged to plead their cause, as a righteous judge, who abhorreth unrighteous sentences among men; but also upon the account of his own interest; how will it triumph in hope; and rest confident, that how long so ever the Lord's last court-day should be delayed, yet a decision will come from his tribunal, at length, in favours of that righteous cause?

4. Faith seeth, that if the Lord should but delay too long to plead for truth, upon the account of which, his people are suffering, the truth it self would fall under doubts and debates: That God's own people would be in hazard to question the same, if the Enemy still enjoyed prosperity; and to thinke, that they had an evil cause, and suffered not for righteousness sake; for (would they be ready to think) were this cause the cause of God, could it be, that he would stand by and look on, when he seeth Enemies trampling all under foot, overturning his work and interest; and not put to his hand to right matters?

Enc.

Enemies likewise would conclude, that God were upon their side, & favoured their cause, because they prospered in their undertakings; & say with that wicked man 2 King. 18: 25. *am I come up without the Lord against this place, to destroy it? the Lord said to me, go up against this land to destroy it.* He prospered in his undertakings against other Nations and People, and he hence concluded, that God was upon his side, and was with him, in this expedition. Strangers also and Onlookers would be ready to conclude the same, and say, if it were the cause of God, that such were owning and suffering for, would the Lord suffer them to be so oppressed and crushed under foot continually? Upon all which Considerations faith will see ground of hope, that the Lord will at length favour their righteous cause, and appear in its defence.

5. Especially considering withall, that usually, when the Lords people are suffering hardly, at the hands of the wicked, upon the account of their honesty and faithfulness, the Cause and Truth of God, for which they suffer, lyeth under a load of Obloquie and Reproach; for then are the mouths of open Enemies, and of Neuters, that never wished well to the cause, wide opened; many blasphemies uttered; so

Q that

that the day is really a day of blasphemy; and of reproach; and in that case, the great Name of God is made to suffer, and is injured and blasphemed: And this giveth no small ground of hope; for the Lord will not lye long under that heavie load, but will vindicate his name, and the cause, which is now reproached, and so much spoken against; and so will take some course, whereby the goodness and justnes of the cause, for the maintainance of which his people are put to hard sufferings, may openly appear, and the Enemies be found liars, in raising such Calumnies against the same. God will be tender of his own glory, and see to the vindication of his name; and upon this his people may conceive hope, that they shall not alwayes lye under those aspersions; but that the day shall come, wherein their innocency shall appear & break forth as the light, and God shall visiblie owne them and their cause, and plead it out against their Enemies, in the view of the world, by some signal delivery, in his own good time.

6. This Consideration will give faith ground enough to conclude, that the Cause, for which his people now suffer, shall be prosperous and victorious: howbeit now they

CHAP. XI. It is Gods quarrel. 36

they are worsted; in this or that particular skirmish and rancounter; yet the Victory, in the hinder end of the day, shall be on their side. What Joy will it yeeld, and what courage, to Souldiers, to know before hand that the day shall be theirs, and that they shall at length prevail over all their Enemies? How will this animate them, and comfort them against small disasters, here or there? And will not this thought, standing upon an infallible ground of certainty, cause the oppressed man to sing, and say, though I have a hard lot, and am worsted and trode under foot; yet ere all be done, the Victory shall be ours, we shall sing the triumphant song, our side shall undoubtedly carry it; for the Lord Jehovah is the Captaine of our Host, He is engaged, the quarrel is His, and more His, than ours: and though for Holy and Wise Ends, he suffereth here or there a small party to be routed or scattered; yet the matter is so managed. and the bartel is ordered with such a conduct, that we shall keep the fields, and all the Enemies shall be broken in pieces, and be for ever defeated.

7. Seing the Lord is interess'd in the quarrel, and the cause, for which his people are suffering, is his; faith may, with
Q a good

good ground, hence inferre, that he will not forget them, in their Afflictions and Sufferings: Since they are suffering upon his account, and in his quarrel, they need not feare, that he shall turn his back upon them, in that condition. No man of generosity, or of common discretion, will forget his servant, when he is put to sad sufferings, upon his account, and for adhering to him, and to his cause faithfully: and may we not be assured, that the Lord will be as render of his honour and credite, as any Man would be? Therefore we may be assured, that for his name and honours sake, he will not turne his back upon his suffering Servants, when they are suffering for their faithfulness to him, and for owning his quarrel. When the Church, Ps. 44. is wrestling with sad Afflictions and Sufferings, and praying that God would not forget her, nor hide his face from her, nor forget her Affliction and Oppression V. 24. she useth this Argument, among others Vers. 22. *For thy sake are we killed all the day long.* Their suffering for his sake, gave them ground to expect, that he would lift up upon them the light of his Countenance, and cause his face shine upon them, and not forget them in their Affliction and Oppression. So *Jeremiah*, when he is praying that

CHAP. XI. his Gods quarrel. 365

that God would remember him, and visit him in his Affliction, he useth this Argument, *know, that for thy sake, I have suffered rebuke.* Jer. 15: v. 15, Whence we see, that this Consideration giveth great ground of hope, that God will not forget his afflicted people, when they are suffering upon his account, and for adhering faithfully to him.

8. Seeing the cause, for which they suffer, is the Lords. Then his people may rest confident, that (1.) the Lord doth and will owne them, in their sufferings: It is no small ground of Comfort, unto poor beleeversto know, that when they are suffering any thing, at the hands of man, they are approven and accepted of the Lord therein: how light would this make all their otherwise heavy sufferings? How comfortable and refreshing would this prove? Now, when they consider that the quarrel is the Lords, that it is for his sake they are suffering, and are sore persecuted, may they not be confident, that he accepteth that as good service off their hands, and approveth them in these sufferings? (2) They may be confident, that he will carry them thorow, and support them under their sufferings; and that he will bear their charges, and lay all necessities to their hands: He will have

no man runing his errands, upon their own charges: Will any man forget, and not provide for his Servant, who is cast in prison, and mishandled for his sake? And will the Lord be lesstender of such as suffer for him, then men will be of such as suffer for them? O what a strengthening Consideration is this, that yeeldeth ground to expect Light from the Lord, in the day of their Darkness; Strength and Reviving, when they beginne to Fainte; Courage and Resolution, when enemies appear terrible!

9. The thoughts of this, that it is the Lord's quarrel upon which they are suffering, may fill their hearts with gladness, and their mouths with a song: what an honour must that be unto poor wormes, that they are called forth to suffer upon such an account? How may the Soul feed with Joy upon these thoughts. O! who am I, that ever the Lord should have granted me a being in the world, and honoured me to suffer, while in that being, for Himself, and upon the account of his truth? Who am I, that he should put that honour upon me, to bear witness to Him, and to His Truth, and Interest? Whence is this to me, that the great God should embark me into his quarrel, and make me a fellow-sufferer with:

with Himself? Yea how may I rejoyce, that ever I had a life and a being, to lose and lay down for such a glorious cause; even a life, that I was under a necessity however to lose, after a few dayes? How, I say, may these and the like thoughts cheer up the soule, and fill it with gladness, and cause him rejoyce, with the Apostles, that he is counted worthy to suffer upon such an account.

10. This may give Boldness and Confidence, in their Approaches to God, whether in reference to Themselves, or in reference to their Enemies: With what cheerful Boldness may they draw nigh to God, and ask of Him what is necessary for their support and through-bearing, when they may say unto the Lord, that it is his Cause, upon which they are suffering, and that his Honour and Glory is concerned in their honest carriage and through-bearing, seeing the quarrel is his. What may they not seek, and hope to obtaine, that is necessary for their support, in such an honourable cause, that concerneth the Lord so neerly? And then in reference to Enemies, how may they hold them up, and all their wayes, before the Lord, when they have ground to think and say, Lord, these are thine Enemies, they are plundering, pillaging, imprisoning, wounding and killing us, all

the day long, for thy sake: It is for thy sake, and for our owning of and adhering to thee, that all this is devised and cruelly executed against us?

11. Is the controversie the Lords, and are they, upon his account, questioned, impaneled and condemned; then they may be assured, that in due time, God shall annul all these unjust & iniquous sentences; & their innocencie shall appear as the light; Their sentence will come forth from his presence, whose eyes behold the things, that are right *Psal. 27: 2.* They may now be condemned as Traitors, and many things may be now falsely charged upon them, and they put to suffer upon these false suppositions and accusations; but when God's grand Court day cometh, all these wrong sentences will be found to have been sentences against the Lord himself, and his interest: And wo then will be to such, as will be found, in that day, to have condemned the innocent, and faithful owners of the Lord and his interest. And what though men judge them now, and give out wrong sentences against them: *The Lord will not condemne them when they are judged Psal. 37: 33.* And if the Lord justifie (as He will justifie the man, that is suffering.

CHAP. XII. Christs Sufferings. 369

ing upon his account) who can condemne, or what matter who shall condemne? *Eſai.* 50: 9. *Rom.* 8: 33, 34. It is the portion of the wicked and of deceitful men, who speak a gainst the juſt with a lying tongue, and compaſſe them about with words of hatred, to be condemned, when they are judged *Pſal.* 109. 2, 7. But there is ſome other outgate awaiting the faithful followers of the Lord, whatever be their lot in a ſinful and wicked world; the faith whereof ſhould be enough to bear up their hearts, and to cauſe them ſing, even when judged and condemned by men, as the greateſt of evil doers, and the worſt of malefactors.

CHAP. XII,

CONSIDERATION VII.

The Sufferings of Beleevers,
for the cauſe of Chriſt,
are *Chriſt's Sufferings.*

THis Conſideration, being of ſo near a kin with the foregoing, and therefore ſerving to cleare, and confirme,
Q. E. in

in some measure, what hath been said, cometh most fitly next to be spoken of.

It is but too ordinary for the Children of God, to suspect the worst, when they are put to suffer, one way or another, for the cause of Christ; and to think, that as they are forgotten of men; so are they forgotten of the Lord; and as men have but slender thoughts of them, and of their sufferings; so they are ready to think, that Christ valueth them at as low a rate: And this maketh their heart sad; and thereupon their affliction becometh a double affliction. Whereas were they once perswaded, that Christ took any notice of, or had any esteem for their sufferings, and looked upon them, as his owne; this would yeeld them much matter of joy and comfort, under all their sad Sufferings. And did they once see, that in their Sufferings for the truth, they were imbarqued with the Lord Jesus, and stood and fell with Him, (as it were) all other discouragements would be easily wrestled over, and the burden it self would be light to bear.

For affording them of a life of strength, joy, hope and confidence unto beleevors, while suffering sad things in a world,

for

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ 371

for their faithfulness to Jesus Christ, there is this ground of encouragement given by Peter 1 Petr. 4: 13. *But rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings.* Is not this wonderful, that the petty, and inconsiderable sufferings of poor wretches should be so valued, and so much thought of, as to be called *the sufferings of Christ*, or a part of them! So Col. 1: ver. 24. Paul tells us, that this was ground of joy to him and others, *who now rejoice (saith he) in my sufferings for you, and fill up that, which is behinde of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his bodies sake, which is the Church*, a very remarkable expression: giving us to understand, that his afflictions were part of the afflictions of Christ; and that thereby he was filling up what was resting and remaining behinde of them. So 2 Cor. 1: 5. speaking of the tribulations, which he and others were under, he calleth them *the sufferings of Christ*. And though they may be so called, because they were endured for the cause of Christ; yet the expression would seem by its emphasis to hint something further. Heb. 11: 25, 26. the suffering of afflictions with the people of God, is called, *the Reproach of Christ*. 2

372 Consider. 7. They are the

Cor. 4: 10. *Alwayes bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.*

In speaking a little unto this, we shall
1. Shew in what respects it is true, that the sufferings of beleevers for the cause of Christ, can be said to be the sufferings of Christ; or they, upon that account, said to be Partakers of Christ's sufferings and reproach. And 2. Shew how faith may improve this Consideration, for a life, in an evil time.

As to the first of these, it must necessarily be observed, That there is a vast difference betwixt the sufferings, which Christ, in the dayes of his humiliation, did undergo, and the sufferings of his members: So that while it is said, that Beleevers, in their sufferings, upon his account, are Partakers of Christ's sufferings, it must not be thought, their sufferings are of the same nature and kinde, with his as Mediator, and as they were laid upon him by the Lord: For Christ Jesus, by his sufferings, was to satisfie the justice of God for sin; and as to this, He trode the wine- presse of God's wrath alone, and of the people, there were none with him: Wherefore in this work of Redemption and Satisfaction, he will have
none

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ 173

none to share with him, in the glory that is due, upon that account; for he made full satisfaction to the Law, & to the Lawgiver: And therefore whatever his followers suffer, or can suffer upon his account, can adde nothing unto the Sufferings of Christ; *by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified Heb. 10: ver. 14.* Neither must we have any such thoughts of our sufferings, lest all be in vaine.

To the question, therefore, How we can be said to be Partaker of Christs sufferings; or how the sufferings of beleevers for his sake, can be called Christ's sufferings, and Christ's Reproach? We shall answere, that this may be understood, in these respects.

1. In respect of that close union, which is betwixt Christ and them: He is the Head, and they are the Members, they make one mystical Christ, 1 Cor. 12: 13.

As the body is one, and hath many members; so also is Christ: Upon this account, as the head is sensible of every hurt or sore, that any member of the body is under; so the Head Christ is sensible of, and touched with the wrongs done to the least member of his mystical body: and therefore what his members do suffer, as such

374 Consider. 7. They are the

that is, upon his account; or because they are members of him; and desire to carry, as his members, he accounts himself to suffer; and these afflictions are Christ's afflictions: He and they being one spiritual body, are also one spirit, as man and wife are one flesh; and therefore, as what wrongs are done to the wife, the husband accounteth to be done to himself, because they are one; so the sufferings of beleevers, and their reproaches, are the sufferings and reproaches of Christ.

2. In respect of that Sympathie, (whereof we spoke before) that is betwixt Christ and his members, whereby it cometh to passe that, he feeleth the wrongs done to his members. In their afflictions, he is afflicted *Isai. 63: 9*. While *Saul* was persecuting the Church, he was persecuting Christ *Act. 9*. He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of Christs eye *Zech. 2: 8*. Their afflictions then becoming his after this manner, all which they suffer, as his, and upon the account of their owning of and adhering to him, may well be called the Sufferings of Christ.

3, In respect that the afflictions, which we suffer, upon his account, and for his sake, are more his, in a manner than ours;

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 975

ours ; as reflecting upon Him , more than upon us : As the wronging of a Noblemans foot-boy , upon the account of his Master , is looked upon as a direct wrong done to the Nobleman , and it is intentionally done to effronte him ; and therefore as he can not but look upon it, as an injury done to him ; so this griefe that he hath at the wrong done may be greater , and may endure longer , than all the griefe, that the suffering foot-boy had ; neither are the sufferings of the foot-boy his sufferings alone ; but , as it were , a part of the Sufferings of his Master , which are much more considerable. Or as the wrong done to a Subject by a forraine Enemy , is looked upon by the King , as a wrong done to himself , the wrong being done to the person, because a Subject to such a King ; and can become the ground of a lasting controversie, if reparation be not made ; for it is looked upon , as an indignity unto the King and State ; and they suffer thereby , as well as the injured Person , yea more ; for his lesse can sooner be repaired , than theirs. Now Christ is our King , and when any of his Subjects are put to suffer , because they are his Subjects , the King is more wronged,

376 Consider. 7. They are the

than they can be; the injurie is mainly done to Him, and is purely out of spleen and ill will against Him; for if any man loved him, that begate, they would love him also, that is begotten; and if the world hate us, Christ hath told us, that it hated him first: Yea it is hatred to Christ that maketh them persecute his members. And therefore their sufferings are manifestly Christ's sufferings; and more his, in a manner, than their own; because principally his.

4. In respect, that Christ is the maine Butt the adversaries shoot at; and thus interpretatively, our sufferings are Christ's sufferings; yea they are his mainly; for through the sides of beleevers, it is Christ, whom Adversaries are seeking to hurt, and ruine, if they could; for the maine, if not the only, cause of all their wrath and rancoure against the poor members, is their hatred of the Head, and their envy against him: if they were not related to Him, and looked not like him; if they were not followers of him, and did not owne Him and His interest, these Enemies of the Lord of Life would never trouble them: so that it is manifest, that it is mainly Christ against whom they Level;
and

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 377

and therefore it is Christ, that is mainly the sufferer; and the persecuted members have but a share of his sufferings, and that but in a small measure.

5. In regard that, as to men, the cause, for which Christ was put to suffering, in the dayes of his flesh, and his members are now put to suffer, is one and the same, upon the matter; so that both head and members are concerned in one and the same quarrel. In a confederat Societie, what is done to one, upon the account of that confederacy, or because he belongeth thereunto, is construed as done to all, the quarrel being common to all, and it being that quarrel, for maintenance of which, they have thus associated themselves together. It is manifest then, how the sufferings of beleevvers, for righteousness sake, are the Sufferings of Christ; because as to the Devil, and as to men his instruments, the cause is one and the same, wherefore they persecuted Christ, and now persecute his members and followers.

6. In regard that, He hath gone the same way before us: we suffer nothing but what he hath suffered already before us; and thus are we partakers of his sufferings.

378 Consider. 5. They are the

ferings, when we follow him through the straits, thorow which He hath gone before us, when we thus share of his lot, and follow the copie which he hath casten unto us, and are made conforme unto Him; according to that *Rom. 8:29.* *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born amongst many Brethren.* Our sufferings are but a very rude draught after his paterne and copie. *We bear about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus,* when we are following suffering and dying Christ; suffering as he did, and bearing about us a dying, suffering, tormented, troubled, distressed, down-cast and persecuted body; thus we bear about in the body, though in a weak, ill drawn after-copie, the dying of Lord, and are made conforme unto Christ, and partakers of his suffering, drink of his cup, and are baptized with the baptisme, that he was baptized with *Mat. 20:23.*

7. In respect, that the onely wise God hath determined and appointed, how much affliction the mystical body of Christ shall suffer, at the hands of Devils and men, in their heat of persecution and malice; so that there is a cup of afflictions

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 379

tions to be filled up by Christ and his followers, and every member must have their share; and so fill up that, which is behinde of the sufferings of Christ.

As to the *Second* particular. It is manifest and cleare, that hence faith may draw out the life of joy and consolation, strength & hope: and the soul, acting faith on this ground, may live a noble life of superabounding joy; & that upon many accounts.

1. That hereby they are made conforme to their Lord and Master: and is it not honour enough, that the Servant be, as his Master? Is it not great honour, for the servant to be clothed with the Masters livery, to be wearing a garment like his, though it be dipt in blood? Herein, beleevers, being made conformed unto their Head and Elder Brother, have great cause of rejoicing, in that love manifested to them therein, and in that honour conferred upon them thereby. Ought they not to rejoice, in as much as they are made *Partakers of Christ's sufferings*?

2- In that hereby, they may know, that the way is prepared for them; He, having gone before them, hath made the way easie. He is gone before us, and hath gone thorow all these afflictions, miseries.

380 Consider. 7. They are the

ries, persecutions, hardships yea and death it self: And thereby hath paved the way to all his followers; and blunted the edge of these deadly weapons: he hath gone thorow these pikes, and they are all broken upon him; so that his followers have an easie part of it now: He had the curse, which was the fierie edge and poison of these weapons, to endure; and this sting is taken out of all these evils, that his followers meet with; so that whatever they are, as to their first rise, and in themselves considered; yet as to them, they are mannaged by the hand of love and mercy, and suggered with loving Kindness, and run in the channell of covenant love. Christ hath borne the brunt of the battel, and the sharpest of the storme, the haile of the curse and wrath of God was upon him; so that the yce being thus broken, his followers have an easie part, and need not fear to follow him; yea may rejoyce to follow such a Captain, who levelleth the way to all his followers. He had an ill-made bed, but he hath made it soft and easie to all his followers, who may now therein finde, where he did lye, and what a fragrant smell of love he hath left behinde him.

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 381

3. In that, all his followers have sure ground of Hope, upon this very account, that they are following Him, and suffering upon His account, and for his cause, that they shall not want his helping, strengthening and comforting hand; He will lend them a lift, and a good lift too. He is bearing the burden, as well as they; yea He is bearing the heaviest part of the load; yea He is bearing thm and it both. The wrestling beleever supposeth, (but through a mistake;) that he is left alone, and is wrestling with the burden of Afflictions his alone; and that he is bearing all the reproach his alone; and he knoweth not, nor seeth not, that Christs back is under the burden, more then his own. When the hand or foot is sore and pained, doth it suffer alone? Is thy head or thine heart taking no share thereof? Is thine head, or thine heart as little moved thereat, or affected therewith, as the head or heart of a stranger? No certainly, thy head is busie to finde out meanes to ease the paine, and to help it away; and every touch of that hurt, stoundeth thee to the heart. And shall the members of a Body of clay, mutually sympathize with and helpe one another? And shall there not be a far more strong and considerable Sympathie betwixt Christ

382. Confid. 7. They are the

Christ the Head, and all his Members? This then must be very refreshing and comfortable, to know that Christ is bearing the burden with us, groaning (as it were) under the load with us. We need not feare, that He will suffer us to sinck under the burden: He knoweth our weakness, He knoweth how little we are able to bear, and will lay no more on, than he knoweth we are able to bear.

4. In that all his Followers, and Sufferers for his sake, may have full assurance of faith, upon this account, that they are his sufferings, that He will nobelie beare their charges, and make up their losses. When a great mans servant is beaten or wounded for his sake, he looks upon himself as engaged in point of honour, to have a tender care of that servant, and to provide all necessities for him, and to be at the expences of causing cure his wounds, and making up his losses, yea and in point of generositie, to do much more than make up his losses. And shall not the Beleever expect, that Christ shall deal as generously with him, as the most generous person in the world would do with such, as suffered any evil for their sake? Certainly Christ will be as good as his word, and his promises shew his rich generositie. He will give the hundred fold

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 189

sold here, and everlasting life hereafter: that is the gift of a King: He will supply all their wants, according to his riches in glory.

5 And then they may rejoice upon this account, that hereby, seings they are suffering for his sake, and partaking of his sufferings, they may approach unto him with Confidence and Boldness, to ask of him a full supply of their wants; and look upon him, as every way engaged, both in point of honour and faithfulness, to lay all necessities to their hand: If they want light in some particular, they may with confidence ask it of him; who is given for a light to his people: When new troubles assault, or new feares come, new temptations presente themselves, new and fresh Enemies set on; and their Strength and Resolution beginneth to decay, and their heart and courage beginneth to fail; then may they, and should they run to the Captaine, at whose back, and for whose sake, they suffer all these things, to seek new and fresh reliefe and supply of throw-bearing strength, that they may be able to standfast in the faith, and to quite themselves like men, in following such a leader.

6 The very apprehension of Christs suffering with them, may yeeld much Joy
and

384 Consider. 7. They are the

and Comfort, and cause them rejoice in their lot, how hard so ever it be: What Joy is it to know, that when they are for Christs sake put to suffer spoiling of their goods, bearing, wounding, imprisonment, confinement, confiscation of goods losse of all they have &c. Christ is not only suffering these evils, in and through them, but is also himself with them, bearing a great share of these sufferings; and is, as it were, suffering the same evils himself, being as it were, plundered with them, imprisoned with them, brought to a scaffold with them. How may the Soul, upon the very Consideration of this, that he hath Company and such Company, in all his tribulations, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?

7. Such may have a Comfortable and Joyful life, in that they may be assured it shall go well with them in end? Is Christ in the sea-tossed vessel with them, they need not fear shipwrack: Is Christ imbarqued with them, they shall not perish: stormes cannot blow them over. They and Christ must die and live together, howbeit then, they meet with many sad and shourie blasts, they shall land saife at length: Though now they have many boote skirmishes, and many bloody bouts, and get many wounds and blowes,

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 385

blowes, yet at length they shall be victorious, and he made to wear the Victors Crown. Hence it is said, *if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together Rom. 8: 17.* and againe *2 Tim. 2: 11, 12.* It is a faithful saying; for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reigne with him. What, and must the poor beleever, that loseth his life, for Christs sake, finde it, yea finde such a life, a life with Christ? Must the sufferer reigne, and reigne with Him? O how may the Faith and Consideration of this fill the soul with Joy, seing the day is coming, wherein they shall be glade with exceeding Joy; and that, when his glory, of whose sufferings they are now made partakers, shall be revealed, *1 Pet. 4: ver. 13.*

8. Upon this account may the Sufferers for Christ have a Sweet and Comfortable life of Joy, that their Afflictions, upon this account, are kindly Evidences of their belonging to the Head, and to that Body; Their shareing of the lot, that is peculiar and proper unto that Mystical Christ, Head and Body, may loose their doubts, touching their interest in the same. There is a measure of trouble, that must go over the whole Body, and when they are under these dwames and fits, they may see to what

R

Body

386 Consider. 7. They are the

Body they belong : and this is comfortable and refreshing : Beside that it is also no small honour to them , that their drop must come into that cup of sufferings , which the Mystical Body must fill up , and that they must come - in with their part of what is yet behinde , in the sufferings of Christ.

9. This Consideration may also contribute unto their Comfortable Life. That seeing Christ is suffering in them , and with them , their Enemies are looked on by Him , as his Enemies ; and all the evils threatned against the Enemies of Christ shall befall such , as persecute them , for Christs sake : They may hold them up unto God , as devoted unto Destruction , upon the account of their being fixed and irreconcilable Enemies to Christ. They need not imprecate evil to them : For Christ as Mediator hath done that already , and will be heard in what he hath desired : All the imprecations , that we see in *Dauids Psalmes* , are to be looked upon as done by him , as Type of Christ : his sufferings at the hand of his Enemies being typical , his Enemies were his Enemies as the Type : And therefore what he did imprecate to come upon them ; was as they were the Mediators Enemies , and as Enemies to him , as the Me-
diators

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 387

diators Type; and so all these are but pieces of the Mediators vengeance, and of what must be done unto them, as the Mediators Enemies: and Beleevers, as the Mediators friends, and suffering upon the Mediators account, have no more to do, but to say Amen to all these; and hope and waite in hope for their accomplishment, in due time. So that all their present prosperitie should not much trouble the sufferers; for they may know, that their day is coming, and all these evils, which are both foretold & denounced upon them, shall take effect.

10. This may yeeld matter of comfort, upon this account, that howbeit others do little value their sufferings, and howbeit, instead of speaking friendly and comfortably unto them, they be adding griefe to their sorrow, accounting them to suffer as fools, and not upon the account of righteousness: Yet Christ hath another value of their afflictions; he looketh upon them, as his sufferings: though others may be little troubled at, or concerned in the paine of thy hand or foot; and may think light of it: Yet thou knowes thy self, how great the paine is, and thou cannot forget it: And no more can Christ forget, or think light of thy sufferings for his sake, because they are his

388 Consider. 7. They are the

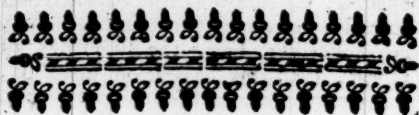
owne . the sufferings of his own body. He will pity and bemoane thy case , when others , it may be , shall stand aloof from thy sore ; because he knoweth it in a special manner , for it is his own.

II. This consideration will also animate unto a right deportment and carriage under the affliction ; for when they consider that they are partakers of Christ's sufferings , and that they are filling up that which is behinde of the sufferings of Christ ; they will see themselves called so to carry , and so to walk , under their troubles and temptations , as that the Lord their Master , of whose sufferings they are made partakers , may not be dishonoured ; and the Church may receive no detriment : I mean, the Church, which is his body , for whose sake these afflictions should be willingly endured, as Paul did 2 Tim. 2: 10. Where he said , *Therefore I endure all things , for the elects sake , that they may also obtaine the Salvation, which is in Christ Jesus , with eternal glory.* And upon this double account , they will see themselves called to suffer with Joy, Courage , Constancie , Faithfulness , Holiness , Self-denial , Patience , and Perseverance ; that hereby the Lord may be exalted.

CHAP. XII. Sufferings of Christ. 389

exalted, the Body of Christ edified, and Enemies no wayes encouraged. Yea, our sufferings, being the sufferings of Christ, laith this obligation upon us, that we endeavour to follow his example. Did he endure the crosse and despise the shame? so should we. Did he witness a good confession before *Pontius Pilat*, when arraigned upon his life? so should we, when called before Kings and Governours for his sake. Did he not revile againe, when he was reviled? no more should we. When he suffered, did he not threaten, but commit himself to him that judgeth righteously? we should follow his steps. And thus in all things declare, by our carriage, that what we are suffering are the sufferings of Christ indeed. And this same Consideration may encourage such sufferers to go & seek of Christ what is necessary for their being carried thorow, so as all may see, that their sufferings are his sufferings indeed, that he may thereby be glorified, others edified, and they comforted.

F I N I S.



THE CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

H e Text cleared and some Generals proposed.	I
The words <i>Heb. 10.</i> from <i>Vers 26.</i> cleared.	2
Apostasie from the professed truth a horrible sin.	7
Fearful judgments await Apostats.	10
In time of danger, it is useful to consider the two fore going truths.	13
Hereby the Elect will be kept sted fast.	17
The context from <i>Vers 32.</i> cleared.	19
Verse 34. cleared.	28
Verse 35. cleared.	31
Verse 36. explained.	39
Verse 37. explained.	43
The words of the Text cleared.	49

CHAP.

The Contents.

391

CHAP. II.

The proper season of faith.	53
What was the present case of the Hebrews in Eight particulars.	54
God's people do oft meet with trouble in following their duty.	63
The promised outgate may seem very dark, in 12 particulars.	65
Reasons of this dispensation.	73
Five graces are hereby tried and exercised.	76
Foure duties called for.	80
What discoveries are made hereby.	84
What further work is hereby carried-on.	86
A double improvment hereof.	90

CHAP. III.

What a life is had by faith in time of trouble	98
A life of justification.	101
A life of Sanctification.	103
A life of peace	105
A life of communion with God.	109
A life of Hope and of Patience.	112
R 4	A life

A life of joy.	116
This life keepeth from Seven evils.	117
Five sweet effects of this life.	123
This life hath various degrees, cleared in Ten particulars.	128
And is not alwaies a like quick.	133
Uses hereof.	135
How God's people act not like this life, cleared in 13 particulars.	138
The causes hereof.	147

CHAP. IV.

The just live this life.	150
Who are not the just here meant, cleared in 8 particulars.	151
Who are the just here understood.	154
Why these only live this life.	147
Eight uses hereof.	159

CHAP. V.

This life, in an evil time, is only by Faith.	164
What is not this Faith, cleared in Six particulars.	165
What is this Faith, cleared in Six particulars.	166
How	

The Contents

393

How this faith worketh in an evil time, more generally, in 6 particulars.	169
What are the special actings of faith in 12 particulars.	173
Scripture grounds proving this Life.	192
A decay of faith causeth a decay of life, in a day of trial, cleared in 8 particulars.	195
Seven causes of a decay in faith.	202
Seven evils of this decay.	206
Six evils should be guarded against, to prevent this decay.	210
How faith may be had in an evil time, Nine meanes proposed.	212

CHAP. VI.

Confid. I.

God's presence with his people in affliction	218
Six things premised for understanding of this.	219
Grounds of faith for God's presence.	222
What this presence of God is, cleared in Six particulars.	224
What are the effects of this presence, in Ten particulars.	227
How faith can improve this for a life, in an evil time, in Ten particulars.	236

R 5

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Confid. II.

Christ's sympathie with his people in affliction.	248
This truth cleared from Scripture.	249
Five grounds of this Sympathy.	251
Ten properties of this Sympathy.	258
Seven effects of this Sympathy.	363
Faith can suck life out of this, cleared in Eight particulars.	267

CHAP. VIII.

Confid. III.

The Lord is the Redeemer.	278
Seven particulars clearing up this ground of life.	279
How faith may hence suck life.	287

CHAP. IX.

Confid. IV.

Promises of delivery.	294
Some	

The Contents. 395

Some promises of this kind.	295
Thirteen particulars clearing up the use- making of promises.	297
How faith can feed on promises, cleared in Ten particulars.	307
And that notwithstanding of sin appearing	319
Cleared by Six particulars.	322

CHAP. X.

Confid. V.

Former experiences are useful.	333
This ground of life cleared up in seven par- ticulars.	334
How former experiences can be improved to advantage, cleared in 6 particulars.	341

CHAP. XI.

Confid. VI.

The controversie is the Lords.	353
Two things premised to clear up this ground of life.	355
How faith can suck life out of this, cleared in Eleven particulars.	357

CHAP. XII.

Confid. VII.

The sufferings of Beleevers for Christs sake, are Christs sufferings.	369
This ground cleared up.	370
The same confirmed by seven particulars.	373
How faith may draw life out of this ground, cleared in Eleven particulars.	379



THE SWAN-SONG:
Or the *Second Part* of the
LIFE of FAITH,
in times of
TRIAL & AFFLICTION:

Opened and applid by
That Late, Learned, eminently Gra-
cious, singularly Faithful & exemplarily
Zealous Minister of Jesus Christ,
MR JOHN BROWN:

And published by his afflicted Friend, &
a poor Wellwisher to the Interest of
Christ, & his suffering Remnant.

1 Cor. 16: 13. *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you
like men, be strong.*

Eph. 6: 13. *Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour
of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil
day, &c.*

Ver. 16. *Above all taking the shield of faith &c.*

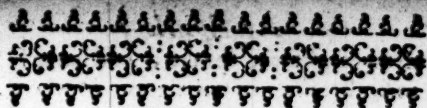
1 John 5: 4. ——— *And this is the victory that over-
cometh the world, even our faith.*

Philip. 4: 13. *I can all things through Christ which
strengtheneth me.*



Printed ANNO DOM. cld. lcc. LXXX.

At
th
m
ne
tr
w
pr
ou



To the
CHRISTIAN READER,
More particularly to the poor
suffering *Remnant* of the
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

DEAR BRETHREN,
and Companions in
tribulation, & in the
Kingdom & patience
of JESUS CHRIST ,
I make no other
Apologie, for this my present addresse,
than that it was amongst the last com-
mands, laid upon me, by the great, &
now glorified Author of this following
treatise, (revised by himself, & almost
wholly printed before his death) to
prefixe a few lines unto it, & so send it
out into the Church; that by it he being
* 2 dead

An Epistle

dead might yet speake, particularly to his Brethren in tribulation, to whom living he was so comfortable, by holding forth light, sanctuary light, in their darkneses and difficulties, and now continues still to be, (after he hath no more a being amongst us) by pointing forth the way of life and strength, whereby the suffering saint (without succumbing or sinking, because of sorrow, misery and affliction) may be made able to do all things, and endure all things, while he walketh in that light. But, *Christian Reader*, while I obey the last command of my dear Brother, I shall so far consult thy advantage, as not to keep thee back, by my tedious and rattlelike scribe, from the perusal of a peece, which not onely, as to thee, needs not my *Epistle of Commendation*; For the *First Part* (long ago in thy hands) is a sufficient Epistle to this *Second*, with all who are in love with

to the *Reader*.

with, & know the necessitie of the way of living by faith, which is the Christians life, in this life; (for, till the day of immediat vision, and full fruition come, we must walk by faith, not by sight: O blessed walke, which brings with it joy unspeakeable, and full of glory! And so it must, since it is a walking with God; For as faith's first work is the association of the soul with him, so its next and after vvork is the assimilation of the soul to him; whereupon followes that neer, that sweet and dear fruition of him, which hath unspeakable joy, as its inseparable Companion, or native effect) But, the due, and deserved praise of the Author, is so much in the Church of Christ, as it needs not the Epistle of any else, to command it; For,

First, If thou be not a stranger in our Israel, whoever thou be; then, if either eminency in grace or learning;
it

An *Epistle*

if vastnesse and pregnancy of parts; if fervor of zeal according to knowledge; if unwearyed diligence, in the work of the Lord, (wherein he laboured more abundantly than any of us all; for no man in the Church of Scotland hath filled up his measure, even as to that: nor know, nor see I a man who is like to doe it, nay who is in capacitie for it;) If a holy heroick misregard of men, and their estimation, in approving himself to God, by a ready and resolute withstanding the corruptions of his time, and opposing all these courses and contrivances, and these unworthy connivings, whereby the cause hath been prejudged; yea basely abandoned, and the free course and progresse of the Gospel obstructed; If single sollicitousnesse, and strenuous endeavours, how to have pure ordinances preserved in this generation, and propagat to the posteritie: in a word, if faithfulnessse,
as

to the *Reader.*

as a servant , in all the house , and matters of his God , even that God, who counted him faithful , and put him in the Ministry ; and loyaltie to his princely Lord and Master, (the prerogatives of whose Crown, the Privileges of whose Kingdom , and the establishment of whose Throne, were more prized by him , more precious and dear unto him , than all other interests whatsoever : nay , he was so far from regarding any other interest, in respect of that alone valuable one ; that , as he was never daunted, from a plain peremptorinesse in owning thereof, by the dread of poor mortals, or the fear of what the stated enemy could doe unto him ; so, he was never demurred, into a forbearance , or brow-beaten into a base and un - Ambassadour - becoming silence , by the displeasure and disconntenancings , even of such of his Brethren, whom otherwise he loved, and high-

An Epistle

ly honoured, as to a plain contending with them, wherein he perceived them not to walk uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, and to the former principles of that Church, while she retained first love, and did first works: Yea, he judged it duetie (and in this he had the mind of Christ) to contend earnestly with them, for their not earnest contendings for the Faith; though, for this, he should have been contemned, and accounted (as he was) a man of contention:) I say, if thou be such an one, to whom such a blessed Conjunction of rare Gifts, with such a rich and plentiful measure of Grace, can endear any man; I then nothing doubt, but **MR BROWN**, Great and Gracious **MR BROWN**, hath such a place in thy soul, and such a preference to others, as thou wilt judge it superfluous in me, to say any thing to commend what the truly great Elijah of his

his

to the *Reader*.

his time (I mean of this present time, when, having served his generation, according to the will of God, he fell asleep,) the man jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, above all his Brethren, whom he hath left behind him, (I except not one Soul, nor am I ashamed, or affraid to give it under my hand) doth here present thee with, as his farewell to the Saints, and the excellent Ones, in whom he so much delighted, and for whose advantage he so much laid out himself, night and day, and for the work and cause of Christ his Lord; In so much as this his kindnesse to the Saints, and care of all the Churches, particularly that poor Church of *Scotland*, kept him alwayes neer unto death, through his not regarding his own life, to supply the lack of other mens service to Christ and to his Church: But, if thou be not such an one; then, as thou declares thy self unworthy of what is here

An *Epistle*

presented, so thou canst not quarrel, if I be so far of the same opinion with thee, though I dare not but wish thee to be quickly of another mind. I know very well, this which is here hinted, of the excellent and savourie Author, will be unfavourie to some; yea, will incense not a few, who would be accounted Masters in Israel who have been busie (while he was busied about the work of the Lord) in backbiting defaming & reproaching him, & that, because he withstood them all to the face, wherein they were, & are justly to be blamed: But, I must lay my reckoning, and have done it, with that, and many such things: Onely, by way of Apologie, I must tell such, that it is not my work, to engage with them, at present, on this head; they may expect to hear of that afterward; yet next, till more come, I doe not crave their libertie or pardon to say, that is shall be amongst the posteritie (as it is already

to the *Reader.*

already with the more serious in this generation) a stain, which shall never be vviped off the memorie of the reproachers, vvhen his memorie shall be blessed, and his cognizance, in the succeeding generations of the Church, shall be, that, in the day vvhen he fell a sleep, the Church of *Scotland* was deprived of the most incomparably able, and the most absolutely burning and shining light, belonging to that Church.

Secondly, it may be an appreciating, and endearing consideration, unto thee, that this Treatise is not only the work of such a worthy vvorkman, such a Walker with God, such a Wrestler with him, such a Witnesse for his Master, and such a beloved Disciple: But it is his last Work; this he wrote at the close of a long walk with God: For, in his walk with him, and after him, having by experience found, there neither would,

An Epistle

nor could be courage, nor constancy, nor comfort in that course, except faith were acting vigourously, upon it blessed object, that Fountain of all fulnesse, both for furniture & frame, both for the light of direction & consolation, and for a measure of life, in order to action, according to the emergent difficulties, & dangers, that are the inseparable attendants, of the duties of the present day: He was taught, by the things which he suffered frō all hands, to make a blessed, & beneficial vertue of this necessitie, & so he held on in his way, (being thus upheld and supported) without turning aside to the right hand, or the left, and without being diverted or deterred from following the Lord fully. The things that he suffered of late, especially at the hands of Brethren, (their shame, but his garland and glory) put him to studie and learn the obedience of faith, wherein he was helped, and taught to
make

to the *Reader*.

make such progresse, and proficiency, as he enjoyed a sweet serenitie & calme, in the midst of all these boisterous blasts, which, out of all airths, blew in his face; but most bitterly out of that airth, whence the storme could, or should least of all have been expected; so that, he did not onely possesse his soul in patience, as moved by none of these things, which befell him, from foes or friends; but he was quietted, quickened, and comforted in his conflictings; yea, he got meat out of the eater, out of weaknesse he was made strong, & enabled to doe exploits as knowing his God: And finding the sweetnesse of this life, (otherwise of many sorrowes) and experiencing, how much he was enabled for all things, through Christ strengthening him, he was moved and constrained, from the abundant furniture, the sweet facilitie, yea the begun felicitie he found in this life and course, to

An Epistle

point forth this way of pleasantnesse, and this path of peace, to such as are put to walke in the midst of trouble; that so they may finde, by following this course, the same Light arising to them in Darknesse; and the same life, strength, courage and comfort, springing up and communicat unto them, whereby they may be enabled to goe foreward, through all difficulties, all dangers, yea and all deaths. Hereby thou who, in the sight of difficulties, and the sense of thy impotency, art made to say, *What is my strength that I should hope?* Art taught to answer by another question, *Since he is strong, why should I despond or doubt?* For, all things are possible to him that believes, all difficulties are superable to faith; for, faith is the engaging of an Omnipotent God, for an impotent Creature, whereby the believer is more than a conquerour: And because that stronger is he who is in the believer,

to the *Reader*,

believer, than he that is in the World, therefore, being, by him that dwells in him, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long suffering, with joyfullnesse, conquer he must; and this is the victorie, whereby he overcomes the World, even his faith; for faith's valour is, when overpowered, to cast it self and its burden upon God, who performeth all things for the believer; and so (how weake so ever in the conflict; yet) by faith he carries away the conquerours Crowne in the issue, and is set down at last to sing, *Thanks be to God who hath given me the victory.* I say then, these are the last vvords, of a great Student in this blessed and mysterious art, and of a noble proficient in this happie studie (for he speaks vvhat he knowes, he speakes vvhat he hath found and tasted) instructing thee, howv thou mayest with him hold on in thy vvay, and vvax
stronge.

An Epistle

stronger and stronger; yea, how thou mayst surmount all difficulties, otherwise insuperable, as carried upon eagles wings; and run, with the greatest burden upon thy back, and not be weary; and walk, with the greatest load upon thy loins, and not be faint. Naturalists, you know, and Mariners tell us of the flying fish, which, when pursued in the water by the *Shark*, flies up into the air, as a fowl, and so escapes the danger: But it can flee no longer in the air, than its fins continue wet, and when these become dry it falls down again into the sea: A lively embleme of a lively Christian who, when in hazard to be swallowed up of trouble, and devoured by the teeth of sharks, mounts up above them upon eagles wings, and so escapes them. But that which waters these wings, whereby faith flies, and that which gives it this vigour is fresh influence of the Spirit:

to the *Reader.*

Spirit: The supplie of the Spirit of Christ quicken's and strengthen's faith, and then failing and feeble faith renews its strength, as the eagle renews her age: Its this which gives weake and withered faith a fresh, vigourous and youthful greenneffe, and puts the beleever in case both to say, *in God have I put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can doe unto me; and also, I am able for all things, through Christ who strengthens me, or puts power in me.* Now the Authors scope and aim is to tell thee, and teach thee how thou mayest be expert in this noble flight above trouble: (O happy dexteritie in a time of trouble upon earth, to know how to make use of faith's wings, in flieing heaven height, and to be instructed in the exercise of that blessed art, how to make use of thy faith, whereby thou pleases God in thy ordinarie walk, for performing these high heroick acts, in the day of the most
dismal

An Epistle

dismal and deep distresse, whereby it is evident, that the sweetest serenitie of soul, in the sadest & most surprising of troubles, is possible to him that beleeveeth!)

Thirdly, That which doth commend Books, and without an Epistle of of recommendation, is an Epistle Commendatory sufficient, & makes all courting of the Reader to their perusal, a superfluous complement, an unprofitable waste of words, yea, & a profuse expense of precious time, is, That what the Author writs be not onely upright, and words of truth; But, that the truth treated of be pertinent to the present day; & the duty pressed be that which must be known, that it may be practised, when upon the real and right performance thereof depends, in a particular manner more than the believers peace; yea, more than his soul, and eternal happinesse can amount unto; Viz. the glorifying of God in the fires of fiery trials,

to the *Reader*.

trials, and the bringing up a good report upon his wayes, by a practical proof, that there is a sufficiency of strength communicable, whereby the weakest is made strong; and a singularity of sweetnesse experienced, whereby a man, otherwise of sorrows can sing in the wayes of the Lord, even when his way lyes thorow fire & water; so that he who hath taken hold of the path of life needs neither faint in the way, because of his own weakness, there being everlasting armes underneath, stronglie supporting; nor yet turn aside out of it, when there is a lyon in it; neither wearie in going foreward, through want of what is sweet and refreshing, since there is a well spring of comfort insured unto the walker in these wayes, so as in the greatest pinch and penurie, of all outward things, yea, when put to the greatest pain, he hath still everlasting consolation, and can glory in tribulation,

An Epistle.

tion, and rejoyce; not onely in the hope of the glory of God; but sing as alreadie in the suburbs of heaven, while under the shineings of his Masters face, and the shedings abroad of his love in the heart. And according to this rate and reckoning I may make bold to say; the mater herein treated of is of that moment, import & present necessitie, as to draw the eyes of all men towards it, that their hearts may be cast into this mould, and they put in case to practise accordingly; for, this was the happie Authors scope; for this he wearied himself, and was at this peece of pains, (amongst his other eminent, singularly useful and assiduous labourings, for the edification of the Church, at home and abroad, the care of all which lay upon him) that thou mightest know how to finde ease, safetie and refreshment, when there seems nothing in thy life, but sorrow; and in thy cup, but gall and worme-wood.

An Epistle

wood. In a word, the Author hath written the first & second part of the *Life of Faith*, that the Reader may write the third part in his practise, by making his life a transumpt of both, in a day when most are making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; and many who once professed themselves Disciples, are now turning back: And, Alas, I am affraid, it shall be observed, and said of them, they walked no more with him; But, for their turnings aside unto these crooked courses, were led forth with the workers of iniquitie: So that this is a word in season seeing besides the native, and intrinsick beautie of truth, that commends what is said to thy peruse, the adventitious beautie of seasonableness endears it to thee; For he that writes it was a Preacher who sought to finde out acceptable words, & the tongue of the learned was given unto him; For, what he writs doth witness,

to the *Reader*,

nesse, that his care vvas vvakened to hear as the learned, that so the might speak and vwrite as the learned.

But, for a conclusion, I must tell thee, that the spiritually vvise, and zealous Author vvas not only driven to treat of this subject, because of the present pressurs of the poor remnant, pressed out of measure, and beyond strength, (though he had this also in prospect) that so they might be quickened, quieted, encouraged and comforted, under these crushing calamities; and might be instructed, hovv to glorifie God, in this day of visitation; and endure the vvorlds hatred and the vvorst that either enraged Adversaries, or incensed friends can doe, as seeing him vvho is invisible, and as believing, that all these shall vvork together for their good, and as assured that they shall turn to their salvation, through the intercession of the Mediator, and the supplie
of

to the *Reader.*

of the Spirit of Jesus Christ : But, more particularly considering our way, and our proceeding from evil to worse; what high affronts have been put upon our infinitely glorious Lord and Master; & how these have not only not been resented and witnessed against, with a zeal, a fervor of pure zeal proportioned to the furious fervidnesse, and unhallowed heat, of that opposition to Christ, and hatred to the coming of his Kingdom in the World, witnessed by the complex of the adversaries course and carriage: But, Alas, to our shameful & astonishing faint (when called to have been valiant for the truth, and to have acquitted ourselves as the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, ambitious to have been sacrificed upon the Interest of our Royal Master's glorious Crown, and Prerogative) hath been added, a drawing back; Courses have been taken, patronized and applauded, partly in
recto,

An Epistle

recto, partly in *obliquo*; And that, by some vvhom least of all it became, &, if I may say so, from vvhole hand Christ might have expected a heroick opposition to these bell-black driveings, vvhereby a defection (for in despite of all the palliatings, and cunning plaisterings to hide this, nowv its manifest) hath been, and is nowv carried on: And there is no small rage vvitnessed, against all vvho essay to discover our iniquitie, to turn avvay our captivitie: In a vvord, vvhen he considered all the dispensations of God, and took notice of the dispositions & propensions of men, not of the multitude, but of Ministers, and Professors, even of these vvhe vvould monopolize to themselves the repute of zealous according to knowvledge, & the onelic vvise men in the Church, vvho knowv the times, and vvhat the Israel of God ought to doe, as if vvifdom vv ere either to die vvith them,
or

to the Reader.

or to live only with the persons of their principles and practices, he fell under the apprehension and persuasion (and who can escape it) of a woful day, coming upon the people of these practices; however a great many have not only been putting far away the thoughts of this evil day, but have been dreaming of a delivery: (ah how deep a delusion shall this be quickly found!) And therefore that the poor servant, who in some measure have escaped, and have endeavoured to keep themselves pure from the pollution of this defection, may know what to doe, and how to carry, in that day of vengeance of our God, when he shall draw his whetted, his glittering and forbished sword, to avenge the quarrel of a broken and burnt Covenant; and that sword shall devour flesh, till the Land, doled under the inhabitants thereof, by transgressing the Law, changing
* * the

An Epistle

recto, partly in *obliquo*; And that, by some vvhom least of all it became, &, if I may say so, from vvhole hand Christ might have expected a heroick opposition to these hell-black driveings, vvhereby a defection (for in despite of all the palliatings, and cunning plaisterings to hide this, now its manifest) hath been, and is now carried on: And there is no small rage vvitnessed, against all vvho essay to discover our iniquitie, to turn avvay our captivitie: In a vvord, vvhen he considered all the dispensations of God, and took notice of the dispositions & propensions of men, not of the multitude, but of Ministers, and Professors, even of these vvhe vvould monopolize to themselves the repute of zealous according to knowvledge, & the onelie vvise men in the Church vvho knowv the times, and vvhat the Israel of God ought to doe, as if vvildom vv ere either to die vvith them

to the Reader.

or to live only with the persons of their principles and practices, he fell under the apprehension and persuasion (and who can escape it) of a woful day, coming upon the people of these practices; however a great many have not only been putting far away the thoughts of this evil day, but have been dreaming of a delivery: (ah how deep a delusion shall this be quickly found!) And therefore that the poor remnant, who in some measure have escaped, and have endeavoured to keep themselves pure from the pollution of this defection, may know what to doe, and how to carry, in that day of vengeance of our God, when he shall draw his whetted, his glittering and forbished sword, to avenge the quarrel of a broken and a burnt Covenant; and that sword shall devour flesh, till the Land, defiled under the inhabitants thereof, by transgressing the Law, changing
* * the

An Epistle

the Ordinances, and breaking the everlasting Covenant, be soaked with the blood of the men guiltie of these abominations: (and then, Alas, who shall live when the Lord doth this?) I say, it was the foresight of this wooll day which made this Seer draw these draughts, and lay before thee these Directions, that thou may not be put out of frame and posture; But mayest be strengthened, perfected and thoroughly furnished unto every good work, when all things run in a confusion, and tend to ruin; and that thou mayest know of a blessed, a secure and safe place of retreat, in that dismall day, when it shall be said to the men with the slaughter weapon in their hand, *begin at my sanctuary*, begin at the houses of Ministers and Professors, (I know, it will be mistaken, if I say it; But yet, I cannot forbear it: Alas? of all the men in the Nation, we may particularly meditate

rat

to the *Reader*.

that terrour; and I feare, it shall be
seen and observed, escape who will,
many of us shall be taken; escape who
will, Ministers, their wives & chil-
dren, and many professors, together
with their wives & Children, shall not
escape;) & mayest be as Mount Sion;
that cannot be moved; yea, and
without fear, by living the life of
faith, though the earth should be re-
moved, and the mountains carried
into the midst of the sea; though the
water thereof roar, and be troubled,
and though the mountains shake vwith
the swelling thereof: There is a re-
fuge, and quiet resting place; there is
strength; and a present help in the
time of such trouble; for God is then
a rock of salvation, and a refuge to
his people, even in such tempests and
troubles, vwhen the Confusion and
calamitie is so great and universal,
as the sea seems to swallow the moun-
tains, and the mountains seem to

An Epistle

smother the sea: And the Authors designe, in what thou art here presented with is to teach thee, how to make this rock of ages all things to thy self, by believing, and acting faith upon him, which he hath made himself to thee in the promise; that so thou mayest be safe and sing, because, to thy securitie by him, there is unspeakable satisfaction to be had in him; when the sinners in Zion shall be afraid, and fearfulness shall both surprize the hypocrites, and many who have the root of the matter in them, because of what they have been; and because of what they have unworthily done, and left undone: he who followes this Course, shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks. his bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure.

Believe it, my Brethren, all you have found is but the least part of
vvhhat

to the Reader.

what you have to fear, yea of what is inevitable: The fury of the Lord is ready to be poured forth as fire upon this generation; the day and hour approaches, wherein no man shall have any thing left him to allay his sorrow, or comfort him in his anguish: But he who, being in Christ Jesus, is in case to oppose the Comforts of the Holy Ghost, and that everlasting Consolation which is in Christ, to present confounding and overwhelming calamities; the oppressions, the horrid and bloody barbarities of enraged, cruel and blasphemous enemies, incensed into a madness against the followers of the Lamb, and thirsting insatiably after the blood of the saints, who dare not receive the mark of the beast; the tumult of incensed friends, the clashings, the contendings, the insurrections of brethren against brethren, will make our poor Land such a weary Land, as men shall be weary

An Epistle

of their lives , and wish to be gone from the evil day ; yea , shall either seek for death , and not find it , or in agony and horror , shall be found of death , and cannot flee from it . But ô how in that day and hour will the sweet shadow , and the secure shelter , of the rock of Ages revive , and refresh such as have access with boldnesse and confidence , to lay themselves down under it ! they shall finde it that place indeed where the weary are at rest ; they shall finde that this is the rest alone , where-with they may cause their weary souls to rest ; and that this is the refreshing too : such as believe in Christ Jesus , and dwell in him by faith , and delight in him by love , shall either not finde the evil of these dreadful dayes , which are coming ; or what they finde of it shall not much trouble them , because of what upmaking they finde in the fruition of him , who gives meat out
of

to the *Reader*,

of the eater & sweet out of the strong;
and who shall walk with them in the
midst of the fiery furnace, when we
may expect, it shall be made seven-
times hotter than ever we saw it. (For
the Devil is come down, having great
wrath, and the cry of our crimson ini-
quities is gone up to Heaven.) O hap-
py is the man, who by all his dis-
tresses, is driven to seek, and make
sure a dwelling, in the secret place of
the most high, and to take up his a-
bode under the shaddow of the Al-
mighty; for, such may sit down and
sing, because safe, and say of the
Lord, *He is my refuge; in him will I*
trust, as it is *Psal. 91: vers. 1, 2.* O
safe! ô sweet refuge! he can finde no
evil who is got in there, and no evil
can finde him: For he covers the man,
with his feathers: who trusts under
his wings, and his truth is his shield
and buckler: Would the man, that is
escaped in thither, change his dwel-
ling

An Epistle

ling place, and abode, for a Kings palace, while in this Paradiſe feaſted upon the peace of God; would he change his ſtelter for a ſtrong towne: O! by no means! the Univerſe cannot afford him ſuch ſecurity and protection; neither can it ſupply him, to a running over, with ſuch plenty of ſure and unſpeakable pleaſure: O how excellent doe theſe finde his loving-kindneſſe, who put their truſt under the ſhadow of his wings! As they ſhall finde there a refuge, until the calamitie be overpaſt; ſo they ſhall be abundantly ſatiſfied, with the ſweetneſſe which they ſhall finde, in this houſe, and he ſhall make them drink of the rivers of his pleaſure; he ſhall ſoother them, while others ſtarve, upon the begu fruitious of himſelf, and while others are made to weep, and wring their hands, over their broken and emptie ciſterns, they ſhall finde, that with him is the fountain of life,

to the Reader.

so that they may drink, and drink abundantly, and thus forget their poverty, and remember their misery no more: Nay, this is such a happy hiding place, as it's a complete dwelling place; any hole or hold that is a shelter and protection, in the day of a windy storme & tempest, is thought good; wars will commend the bottom of a dark dungeon, where a man is as buried alive; yea a coal fire (whereof some dear to God have in our dayes, while the wicked were hunting for the precious life, been forced to make use as a shelter) beyond & above a palace of pleasure; but o what a sure, what a safe refuge is the rock of Salvation in time of trouble! O how doe the evincing walls of Christs righteousness, & power, these everlasting armes underneath, supporting, and round about surrouding & preserving, from the tempest of wrath, that it cannot invade or break thorow make such ac-

An Epistle

commodation sweet & pleasant ! But, when with all? this secret place of the most high hath not onely all safetie in it, but it hath also all sweetnesse, all satisfaction and all goodnesse laid up in it, for such as it hids : Its not onely a strong place, that hath salvation for walls and bulwarks ; But it is within this also, that he shines and shewes his 'marvelous' kindnesse, *Psal. 31: vers. 20, 21.* there is not onely a refuge here, but there is besides a rich treasure of all goodnesse : laid up in this storehouse, to be laid out, and made forthcoming for all who enter within the gates of this Citie : Its not onely a house of war, but a house of peace and pleasure ; its within these walls that that peace of God, which passeth understanding, doth guard the heart and mind ; as its here, that the place of their defence is the munition of rocks, so it is within this rock, that their bread is given them, and
; their

to the *Reader*.

their waters are made sure; -there is great farnesse within this strong hold for feasting souls, and a river of pleasure for their refreshing: This is that unexhausted well-spring & fountain of loving kindnesse, tender mercies and bountie, which glads perpetually the hearts of all beleevers: This is the river that maketh glade the whole Citie of God: This is the very Fountain of life it self; thirsting to be drunk of by thirsty souls; which is nothing elle, but God himself imparting, and communicating himself, to his emptie and indigent people, and making up thereby all their wants, according to his riches in glory; a saving God, satiating the weary soul, and replenishing it with goodnesse; this River of God which is full of water running in into the heart of him who hath opened his mouth wide, till it be filled, to a running over. O how do they, who finde by tasting how good he is, and

An Epistle

what is to be had in the Kings chambers, pitieth the poor mistaken World, that feed upon husks, while they are feasted with these royal dainties. Alas! the World, who are strangers to their joy, knowes little what a Kings life they live; and how while in their wilderness-lot, they feed upon Manna, and are feasted with Angels food; they little believe, how the People of the Lord, in their shuttings up, are so satiate with goodnesse, as their hearts are enlarged, while made gladd by the light of his countenance lifted up upon them, in their desirings for others, that it were with them in all things, as it is with themselves, save as to their bonds: O what a blessed hiding place doe they finde him! He is such a secure hiding place, as is also a most sweet, beautiful and refreshing resting place; a refuge, where repose and soul ravishment are met and married together, without a divorce.

Now

to the Reader.

Now, could a soul think of changing his dwelling place, could he ever by choice and upon deliberation come out, after he hath entered into these chambers, and shut the doors about him, and hath tasted and seen how good God is? No sure, it will not, it cannot think on this without terror; it will not, after it hath drunk of the river of his pleasure, and is satisfied with the fatnesse of his house, leave these pure springs, to drink of an impure puddle. O how easily must the soul be arrested, where it is ravished in the fruition of what it finds.

Now, my dear and distressed Brethren Consider, that you may not be weary nor fainted in your minds, in the day when the blast of the terrible one is as a storme against the wall, what a compleat hiding place you have from trouble, and what a citie of refuge you have to flee unto, *Thou art my hiding place,*

An Epistle

place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance, said the Psalmist Psal. 32. And in this he is not alone, for grace hath made you sharers with him of this great goodnesse: The sure mercies of *David* are made sure to all who have taken hold of the Covenant, so as whosoever have fled into Jesus Christ for a refuge from wrath and for pardon of sin, when pursued by justice, they may conclude this as a sweet consequent of it also, *Thou art my biding place from trouble*; And whatever hardship you may meet with, or whatever heavinesse you may be under, yet you may conclude (O comfortable conclusion) *That the Lord will command his loving kindnesse in the day time for you, and in the night his song shall be with you*; yea, you shall be compassed about with songs of deliverance, songs shall inviron you about, and joy shall break in on every side;
you

to the *Reader*.

you shall be able to look no where (even while all who look on may think your misery unmixed, and your sorrow without the least alay of sweet) but you shall finde matter of a song, and be able to command a most sweet consort of musick within your own soul, because both safe and satisfied. The Lord will be a refuge, in times of trouble, *Psal. 9.* and they who know his name, which is a strong tower, may and will put their trust in him. This then is the all of your businesse in order to support, sattie and satisfaction; in order to your being in case, both to honour him, and to be happie, in the midst of all possible sufferings for his sake; to betake yourselves to him for shelter, and trust in the covert of his wings: And it is for this end, that this teacher, taught of God, hath left his Brethren in affliction these directions, that as they may be perswaded to stand perfect and compleat

An Epistle

pleat in all the will of God; so amidst
all their sufferings for his sake, they
may know how to have a sweet foreta-
tie of soul, by setting faith upon him
as a full Fountain, fitably to all their
needings, wantings, darknesse, dif-
ficulties and dangers; and so be put
in case to say, *In the Lord have we
righteousnesse and strength; in him by
whom we are justified, in him and
by him do we glory in tribulation, and
are more than conquerours.* Now, that
you may live more constantly with him
& have a more comfortable and joyful
life then ever, in a fellowship with the
Father & with his Son J. Christ; that you
may have grace for grace, yea an all
of grace, whereby you may glorifie
your Father which is in Heaven; ad-
vance the doctrine of God the Saviour;
be enabled to fight the good fight of
Faith through Christ strengthening
you, and endure to the end, by the
new supplies of the Spirit of Christ, as
it

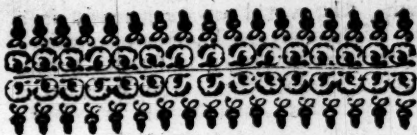
to the Reader.

it is the aim of the Writer of this treatise, who after all his sufferings and sorrowes, (in which and under which he behaved as a good souldier of Jesus Christ; and was observed, to have acquired a special dexteritie, in making use of the shield of Faith) is now got above them, and eternally comforted over them, in the sight and fruition of that God, in whose service he lived, as devoted to his fear, and died in that noble posture; So it is for you the earnest desire of his soul, who is

Your poor Wetwisher and Companion in tribulation.

THE

THE



T H E
L I F E of F A I T H
in times of
P E R S E C U T I O N.
P A R T. II.

T H E I N T R O D U C T I O N.



Word spoken *fictly* (saith the Wise man Prov. 25. ver. 11.) *or in its season*, or as it is in the Original, *upon his wheels*, is like apples of gold, in pictures of silver; that is, is both pleasant and profitable. We began, in the foregoing Treatise of this Subject to explaine the nature of this Life, which is to be had by faith, in a very sad and trying time; how and what way faith interesteth a Soul in this Life; and how they should

A

faith,

2 The Introduction.

faith, who would partake hereof, in a day of Difficulty and Temptation, wherein, because of adhering to Christ, and his Truth, the life of his people is made bitter unto them, and they are exposed to many Troubles and sharpe Exercises: And, for a further Encouragment unto a faithful and stedfast adhering to the Truth, in a day of stormy Tempests, and fierie Trials, we mentioned some of those many Considerations, which the Lord had left on record, in his word, that we through patience and comfort of these Scriptures might have hope; and so might be perfect, and of good comfort: such as

1. Gods promised *Presence* with them, in all their Trials, how sharpe and fierie so ever, the faith of which would make the weak and fainting soul become couragious and valiant, as *David*.

2. *Christ's Sympathie* with them, in all their Distresses, Troubles, Necessities, Dangers, Paines, Losses, Crosses, and Sufferings for Him, and His Cause; which, if firmly beleaved, according to the sure and undoubted grounds thereof, could not but make them sing all their Sorrow out of countenance.

3. The *Lord's Stile* of being a Redeemer; which if fled unto by faith, in an evil day, would

The Introduction.

3

would prove a strong Tour, to which they might run and be safe.

4. The *promises*, which are Many, Great, Glorious, Sutable, Pertinent, Precious, Sure and Covenanted; and as these are made and registred of purpose, that His People might have strong Consolation; so the Christian faith & Improvement of them, in a day, when Dispensations would seem to cross them, is both the special duty of His people, in that day; and also the only mean to keep them in life, and hold their head above water, when called to swim against both tide and stream; and the fixed faith of these would both stablish & strengthen the tossed and wearie soul.

5. *Former Experiences* of God's Care, Faithfulness, Tenderness, Readiness to deliver and supply wants, to carry thorow Troubles, and at length, in due time, to deliver out of them. These, when rightly improven, according to Gods warrand, and Gospel grounds, will furnish a feast, whereupon faith may feed, and the soul become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and with Courage, Hop and Confidence wade thorow a Sea of Affliction.

6. The *quarrel and controversie is the Lords*. A noble ground of courage, comfort and confidence, when beleaved and rightly Improved.

A 2

7. Their

7. *Their Sufferings are the Sufferings of Christ*, when they are for His sake, and upon His account. And this cannot but be a wel full of Consolation, unto the poor afflicted and persecuted Childe of God, when it is beleaved, and fed upon by faith.

These I have (as the Lord was pleased to assist) spoken a little unto, in the foregoing Piece, onely in order to this End, That the faithful and honest hearted Peleever, who either hath already met with, or layeth his account to meet with, Sufferings of one kind, or of another, in following his Lord and Master, in the way of Truth and Righteousness, according to the Commands of God, and Institutions of Christ, may in part be helped to know his own strength, where the stock thereof is, and how he may improve the same to his own rich advantage, in every Case and Condition, that the Lord, in his wise and holy Providence, bringeth him into; and that so, as, notwithstanding of all the fiery Trials, sharpe Afflictions, sore Temptations, sad Exercises, cruel Persecutions, continual Tossings and Harassings and pinching Straits and Difficulties, that he may meet with, in his way, he may be helped unto a Christian Deportment, a Rejoicing
ever,

The Introduction.

5

evermore, and a bearing of the cross with Joy, Valour, Christian Courage, undaunted Resolution and a fixed Stedfastness and Unmovableness in the way of the Lord: and so win to a life of faith, and through faith, in the midst of all the deathes, that he is to rancountre with, in his way, to the everlasting possession of that Crown of life, and of the Inheritance, that is Incorruptible and Undeiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto Salvation.

I shall now, in the prosecution of this Matter for the end mentioned, mentione and speak a little unto some other *Considerations*: such as.

CONSIDERATION. VIII.

It is the decreed will of God.

IF the afflicted soul, that is tossed with Tempests, and not comforted, and is like to sinck under the heavy burden of Affliction, Temptation and Tribulation, were considering aright, how that *affliction cometh not forth of the dust, nor trauble springeth*

was out of the ground, Job 5: 6. that is, That afflictions come not by meer Chance, neither have they all their Original from Inferiour agents, carnal and worldly Instruments; but there is an higher hand to be observed and espied in all, that the men of this world, the Instruments of Satan, devise and execute, and that there is an higher Resolution, Decree and Determination, to be heeded, than what is taken by man. If the afflicted soul (I say) were considering this, he would finde himself called to far other Thoughts and Meditations, than he hath, or can have, when his mind is onely porcing upon the secondary and far inferiour rise of his trouble, to wit, as from men. We see what course Peter took Act. 4: 27, 28. When thinking upon the rage of Enemies against our Lord, and against them, his Servants, for his sake; for of a truth (saith he) against thy holy Child Jesus; whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilat; with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done. So Act. 2: 23. He tels them, who had been Instrumental, in killing of the Lord of life, that he was delivered by the determinat Counsel and fore knowledg of God, otherwise they had had no power over him.

It is the decreed will of God. 7.

him. It is good and necessary for Beleevers to be alwayes, and then in particular, fixed in the faith of this, That nothing cometh to passe by chance or fortune (as we say :) but that all events, that fall out or come to passe, are from Eternity. freely and unchangably Ordained and Appointed by the unalterable Determination and Decree of the holy and wise Counsel of God : for *he worketh all things after the Counsel of his own will*, Ephes 1: 11. There is an unalterable Decree past in the grand Court of Parliament in heaven, concerning all Events, that fall out in the world; even such, as we would think to be most uncertaine and contingent, as events determined by lot, *Prov. 16: 33. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* What more uncertain, than that the souldiers should not handle Christ, after the same manner, that they handled the other two, who were crucified with him: and yet they broke not his bones, as they did the bones of the rest; and they pierced him, which they did not to the rest; and that because, it was determined of God, that not a bone of Christ should be broken, and also that he should be pierced; and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, where mention was made of these determinations, as we

see in the Evangelists, besides many other meer (to us) accidental things, that befell him.

I know what difficulties some move about this matter, in sinful events, as all the Trouble, Affliction, and Persecution are, which the people of God meet with, at the hands of wicked Instruments, upon the account of their adhering unto Truth, and following duty: But I shall purposely wave all disputes, at this occasion, and onely hold forth the Truth, and thereafter shew, how it ought to be improved unto advantage, in such exercising times.

I. Whatever Affliction, Cross, Trouble, Suffering, Tria' or Tribulation, any of his are put to endure, in following of duty, it is not to be looked on, as an accidental, fortuitousevent, or chance; but as determined of the Lord, who hath in his Sovereign wisdom and Counsel thought fit, to have it so; and ordered it, that it should be so, that his people in all ages, should meet with Opposition, Contradiction, Affliction, Crosses, or Persecution, at the hands of one or other: so that the Substance of the Trial and Exercise is to be looked upon, as ordained and determined of Jehovah: Such a determination, as this, must be the ground of that *Act. 14: 22.* — *And*
that

It is the decreed will of God. 9

that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God : And of that, wick Paul saith *Act 20: 23.* though he knew not in particular what evils should befall him at *Ierusalem* ; whither he was now going ; yet he knew , that bonds and affliction did abide him ; saying, *Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every City , saying , that bonds and affliction abide me.* It was determined then that these , as pages of honour , should attend him , and should wait for his landing in every place he came unto. And yet more clearly he tels the *Thessalonians* , *1 Epist. 3: 3.* That they knew , that he and the rest were appointed hereunto , that is , to afflictions ; adding *Vers. 4.* For verily, when we were with you , we told you before , that we should suffer tribulation , even as it came to passe, and ye know. Peter also , in his first *Epistle*, mindeth those , he writteth unto , of this , several times , and pointeth them unto this will of God , that they might eye it , that is , His determining , decreeing , and appointing will *1 Pet. 3: 17.* For it is better , if the will of God be so , that y^e suffer for welldoing , &c. And againe *Chap. 4: 19.* Wherefore , let them that suffer , according to the will of God , &c. From all which Testimonies , we see , that there is a Will , Determination , Resolution and Decree of the Ancient of dayes past , a-

nent the Afflictions, Trials, Tribulations and Sufferings of his people.

2. Not only is there a Decree and Determination past, in the Court of heaven, about the Sufferings of the people of God, in the *grosse* (as it were) and in general: but also the special Kind of the Crosse, or Affliction, that they meet with, or the special manner, or quality thereof. God hath not only decreed, that this or that man, this or that follower of Christ, shall meet with some Crosse and some Affliction, or other; but he hath determined the *species* and *kind* thereof; *to wit*, whether it shall be a cross as to his Body, or as to his Estate, or as to his Spirit; or as to several or all of these together; whether he shall be put to suffer Finings, or Confinments, or Imprisonments, or Exile, or Death; whether Scourgings, Paines and Torments, or Harassings, Feares, Perils, or what ever it be. Paul knew, that *bonds* did abide him. The Lord determined, that *Abraham's* Posteritie should be strangers, in a Land, that was not theirs, & be made to serve *Gen. 15. vers. 13.* He determined that *Satan* should cast some of the Church of *Smirna* in prison, and that they should have tribulation, *Revel. 2: 10.* We know also, what was particularly threatened against *David*, *2 Sam. 12: 11.*

It is the decreed will of God. 11

3. As the Lord decreeth the Kind and Species of the Trial; so likewise he passeth a Determination, concerning all the Ingredients and Parts of the same. The trial possible is not one single Exercise, but one complicated, and compounded of many; a cup not of one pure liquor, but mixed of many ingredients; but of how many Ingredients so ever it be compounded, and of how many parts so ever it consist; yet all of them are particularly and determinatly decreed and appointed of the Lord. Many bitter ingredients were in the cup, which Christ got to drink; but all and every one of them fell under a plaine and peremptour determination of heaven. They were gathered together (saith Peter, in the fore-cited place) *to do whatsoever thy hand and thy Counsel determined to be done*; there was a whatso-ever here: Nothing was or could be done, but what this Counsel of God had Determined to be done; and all that was done, was Determined by this Counsel.

4. The Degree, and Measure of the affliction, that His people are to meet with, is as particularly determined, as any circumstance thereof else: we know what Joseph's Brethren had intended against him, when they said, *come let us slay him, and cast him into some pit*, Gen. 37: 20. But God had

not intended so much; and therefore they were made to change their minde; and to sell him to the *Midianites*, *Vers. 28.* And though thereby they thought they were quite of him for ever, and that he should remaine a slave to his dying day; yet we know it came otherwise to passe; they thought evil; but God meant it unto good *Gen. 50. vers. 20.* As the Lord had another end before his eyes, than they had; so he had determined, that they should not reach their end, nor do any more, than should contribute unto His end. The King of *Affyria* had it in his heart, to destroy and cut off Nations not a few. But God had another end in raising him up to be a scourge: and therefore suffered him not to do all he would, *Eesai. 10. 6, 7, 12.* Upon this ground it is, that he debateth with his people in measure, when he sendeth forth his rod; and stayeth his rough winde in the day of his east winde *Eesai 27. 8.*

5. The Season and time of the affliction and trial is likewise determined of the Lord, which is another Circumstance, sometime very considerable, and weighty. He hath determined the minure of time, when it shall beginne, and with what occasion it shall be trysted. He determined the precise time, when the *Messiah* should be cut off,
after

It is the decreed will of God. 13

after threescore and two weeks , Dan. 9
vers. 26.

6. The Duration of the Trial is also determined by the unchangable decree of God , to a day , yea , to an houre and a minute. He decreed the length and duration of the affliction , that was to come upon the posterity of *Abraham*, four hundred and thirtie Years *Gen. 15: 13. Exod. 12. vers. 13.* And at the end of these Years, even the self same day , it came to passe, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt, where these Years of servitude were to end. So he determined seventy Years for the captivity of *Judah* in *Babylon*, *Jer. 25: 12. and 29: 10. Dan. 9. vers. 2.*

7. He hath also determined who shall be the Instruments of the trouble , He said, he would *hisse for the flie* , that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt ; and for the bee , that is in the Land of *Assyria* , *Eesai. 7: 18.* He appointed the ruine of *Judah* to be by the *Babylonians*, or *Caldeans*. He determined to raise evil against David , out of his own house, *2 Sam. 12: 11.*

These particulars might have been further enlarged , and confirmed ; but because I suppose the truth herein will not be denied, or questioned by the Lords people.

it will be much more useful to speak a few things, concerning the right use making of this Truth, That there is a Decree past in heaven from all Eternity, touching our Sufferings, and all the Ingredients and Circumstances thereof, concerning the manner and way of our troubles, the time when, and how long, the Instruments by whom, and all the other particulars considerable in the same: all are fixed by a peremptory and unalterable Determination.

Now the faith and believing Consideration of this would still, and calme the risings of our proud spirits, and the insolent stirrings of our corruptions, when the Affliction, that is bitter and unpleasant to the flesh, is lying on; and make us patiently endure all, and sweetly submit to all, saying, *the will of the Lord be done: Let him do what seemeth him good*; as good old Eli said, when he heard the determination of the Lord concerning him, and his family, wherein were many sad and bitter ingredients, as may be seen 1 Sam. 2. and 3. Chapters: and *god is the word of the Lord*, as good Hozekiah said, when he heard by Esaias, that the Lord had determined; that all that was in his house, and all which his fathers had laid up in store, untill that day, should be carried to Babilon, nothing should be left; and

It is the decreed will of God. 15

and of his sones, that should issue from him, which he should beget, should they take away, and should be Eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon *Esaï. 39. vers. 6, 7, 8.* Whether.

(1.) Our thoughts be troubled at the kind of the Cross or Affliction, which is upon us; so as we are ready to say, had the Lord sent any other rod or affliction upon us, than this, wherewith we are exercised, we could better have born it, Had he visited me (will one say) with Poverty, and not with Disgrace, I could have born it: and another, had my affliction been any other, than just what it is, I could have comported with it; but the consideration of this, that God hath decreed, that *that*, even *that same* crosse, should be thy crosse, and no other, will make the Soul sit down and say, seeing the Lord hath from all eternity appointed and shapen-out this, even this, and none else for me, I must bear it, and submit to his will, who is wiser, than I am, and seeth further than I do, and knoweth what is good and best for me, better than I my self do, His holy will be done. *This is a grief, and I must bear it, saith Jeremiah Ch. 10: 19.*

(2.) If our heart be troubled and vexed at the Consideration and thoughts of the
par-

particular Ingredients in and Parts of our mixed and compounded cup of affliction, whereof every one seemeth more bitter than another; and we be saying, we are compassed with evils on all hands; trouble of Body is upon us, and trouble of Mind also; we are wrestling with paines inward and outward, with poverty, with disgrace, with perils and hardships; and all at once: This will compose our spirits, if we call to mind, that God hath willed and decreed all this; He thought good to have it so; He hath ordered, as a wise Physician, all the Ingredients of our bitter cup: and what have we to say against him? *Job*, we know, had many a bitter ingredient in his cup, and this compesceth the tumultuatings of his spirit *Job* 23: 13, 14. *But he is in one mind, & who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doth. For he performeth the thing, that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him.* As if he had said, what He will do, He will do; none can turne him, or make him change his mind; He performeth what He hath appointed and decreed for me; and He can do much more yet, and what know I but he shall do much more against me, than he hath done? This did so far put him from quarrelling at what was done; that he was troubled and afraid

afraid at the thoughts of the Majesty and Sovereignty of this great King, who doth what he will; and so might adde yet more ingredients in his cup, as long as he was left breathing, and thereby make his case worse.

(3.) If the thoughts of the exceeding great weight and measure of the Trouble vex us; this may counter-work that, and calme us: if we should suppose, that God doth not measure-out our calamitie by drachmes and unces, but by pounds and stoneweights; and thereupon cry out, that our Trouble is greater, than we can bear, and give way to sinful murmurings and complainings: we should do well, in that case, to call this to mind, That all the doses are weighed and appointed for us from eternity, He hath measured every scruple or graine weight thereof; and what he hath appointed for us, we must have; He knoweth best, what dose or measure of such or such a simple, and what weight or quantity of all together will worke best on our humors: and this will helpe to calme our spirits; knowing that He hath determined all things according to infinite wisdom, according to the Counsel of his own will; and more than he hath appointed shall no man be able to inflict. He leaveth

vech not the measuring and weighing out of the ingredients of our calamitie, unto men or enemies: but himself doth it, by an unalterable Decree, that all the rage of Enemies can not change as to one ale, or in the hundereth part of one drachme. We hear what Christ said *Joh. 18: 11. The cup, which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* It is true, when the dregs of this cup, wherein was the Curse, was presented to him, his holy humane Nature, in a sinlesse manner, scunnered at it *Mat. 26: 39. If it be possible, let this cup passe from me:* Yet, as sweetly acquiescing in the Lord's Determination, he addeth, *Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done.* And againe *Vers. 42. O father, if this cup may not passe away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.* Bitter and sharpe was this cup, even to the highest degree; yet he viewed the will of God, appointing that he should drink it; and calmly submitted, and said, *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

(4) It is true, the Consideration of the season, in which we are exercised and trysted with such a trouble, may adde griefe to our sorrow; and we may say in our vexation, had this Trouble come upon us, at any other time, we could have better comforted therewith; had it either come soon-
er,

It is the decreed will of God. 19

er, or later, we had been more able to have born it; but as it is come precisely at such a nick of time, it becometh a double burden unto us: Yet it will help to calme us, and compesce our turbulent spirits, to remember, that He, who knoweth all seasons, and all times, hath chosen this and no other, for the particular season, wherein we shall meet with such trials; and it could be no otherwise, than he hath willed, the trials behoved to come, at that very nick and minute, and no other: an ancient Determination passed thereupon, and no power under heaven could alter it, no not for one houre or minute.

(5.) When our thoughts are busied about the Duration of the Trouble; this Consideration of a Divine determination, past also thereupon, will contribute to our settling. We are ready to cry out. when afflictions lye heavy upon our loines, oh will they ever come to an end: shall we never be redeemed herefrom? Shall we never see a good day again? And we are ready to conclude, that our hopes are perished, and we are cut off for our parts: as *Hezekiah* said when trouble lay upon him *Eesai. 38: 10, 11, 12, 13.* *I said in the cutting off of my daies, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of mine years.* I said, I shall

not see the Lord, the Lord in the Land of the living, I shall behold man no more with the Inhabitants of the world; mine age is departed, and is removed from me, as a shepherds Tent. He will cut me off with pining sickness, from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that as a lion so will he break all my bones: from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. The affliction, through the distemper of our spirits, raiseth such a mist before our eyes, that we can not see thorow the dark face of the dispensation. How oft do we limite the holy one of Israel, and say, if he come not before such a moneth, or such an year, we may conclude, that he will not come at all, and so need waite for him no longer: and the oftener, that our foolishly set & prefixed Periods go over, & the storm continueth, or groweth, our fainting & despondence groweth: especially when we consider, the evil disposition, rage and cruelty of Enemies: and see how their strength groweth, and providence seemeth to smile upon them. But now the faith of this, that He, who hath set bounds to the raging of the sea, saying, hithertill shalt thou come and no farther, hath also bounded and limited the time, how long such a Calamity, or Trial shall endure, will sedate

It is the decreed will of God. 21

sedate our mindes, and keep us calme, and free of that discomposure of Spirit, that the thoughts of the restless Malice, incessant Rage, and cruel Hatred of the Enemies will and do usually cause; for do they what they can, God will observe the Periods prefixed by himself: his thoughts take place in all generations. And when our hearts are disquieted at the thoughts of the long continuance of the Affliction, the calling of this to remembrance, That the only wise God hath determined all the houres and minutes of its continuance, for his own holy ends, will prompt us to say, we cannot strive against the Almighty. Let us therefore waite His time, in patience; all our struggling will but perplex our selves the more; and all our endeavours to get free, will but contribute to our further entanglement: we shall not be able, do what we can, to Anticipate his day; and therefore it is best for us to minde the duty of the day, and lay aside all thoughts of using any unlawful meanes for our outgate, and waite in patience, untill his good time come.

(6.) As also the thoughts of the Instruments of our trouble and calamity may sadly affect us, as we see it did David Psal. 55: vers. 12, 13, 14. *It was not an Enemy, that reproached me, then I could have burnt it; neither*

*aber was it he that hated me, that did magnifie
 himself against me, then I could have bin myself
 from him. But thou, a man, mine equal, or
 a man according to my rank, my guide, and
 mine acquaintance. We took sweet Counsel to-
 gether, and walked unto the house of God in com-
 pany. See Ps. 41:9. So many, upon this account,
 may say, If my trouble were brought unto
 me by any other hands, and instruments, I
 could comport the better with it; but when
 it is caused by such an one, my neer Relation,
 mine obliged friend, of whom I least ex-
 pected any such thing, and unto whom I
 could have yeelded up my self, and all I had,
 how heavy must it needs be unto me? But
 the Consideration of this, That so it hath
 seemed good unto the only wise God, and
 Supream Sovereigne, may and should, and,
 when rightly beleevved and improven, will
 cause us lay our hand upon our mouth, and
 say, The good will of the Lord be done;
 Hath he determined, that such an one, and
 not another, shall occasione all my griefe
 and sorrow; shall be instrumentall in all my
 Calamities? good is the will of the Lord:
 though I would think, that if I were perse-
 cuted and troubled by others, it would be
 better, and I could bear it better; yet
 seeing Infinite wisdom hath determined
 this*

this circumstance of my calamity ; why should not I acquiesce ?

Thus we see , how this Consideration, rightly improven and duely beleevd, will help such, as are under Affliction, Trouble, or Calamity , to a sweet, quiet, submissive and patient life : for

1. By this meanes, the soul will be freed from sinful murmurings , grudgings, frettings and repineings , at this or that Particular , this or that Instrument , or this or that other Circumstance , of its present Distress and Calamity ; in that hereby it will be made to see , that its murmuring thus is against the Lord , and against his Sovereignty , who determineth what he will , according to the good pleasure of his will , and is to give an account of his wayes and determinations to none.

2. This will help unto a Christian Patience under all , that God thinketh good to lay on ; and to endure patiently without wearying untill his good time come : for they will easily see , that it is not for them to strive against the Almighty ; or to think to cause Him alter his Purposes and Resolutions, seeing He is of one mind, and none can turn him.

3 This will teach Christians sweetly to comply with all the holy determinations of God ,

God, concerning their sufferings, and to say heartily and cheerfully, *The will o' the Lord be done*; as those did, who were perswading *Paul* not to go up unto *Jerusalem*, and found that he would not be perswaded.

Act. 21: 14. O what a sweet life is this, to be sailing with the stream of God's eternall Determinations; and to be embracing and kissing every Dispensation, we meet with, how sharp and bitter so ever it be, because it is Determined by the absolute Sovereigne and Lord of Heaven and Earth! How light and easie doth this make every load, that is lying upon our shoulders, when we bear it as bound upon us by an everlasting Decree?

4. This will help unto a life of practical Praising of the Lord, as Absolute Sovereigne: for when the event is submitted unto and sweetly embraced, because determined by a fixed Decree of the Lord *Jehovah*, the soul doth thereby declare, and acknowledge His Sovereignty; and upon the matter, by practice, in submission, even though silent, doth Celebrat the praises of that Absolute Sovereigne, who is God over all, blessed for ever; while as such, upon the contrary, who fret and rebell against the Lord's Determinations, by refusing to give that sweet hearty submission

sion, that is requisite, do give a practical declaration of their not beleev'ing and acknowledging of Him to be the Sovereigne Lord of all.

5. The thoughts of this will free the soul of many heart-perplexing soul-distracting, disquieting and renting thoughts; such as these; If this had not been, or if I had not been in such a place, or had not done such or such a thing. I had been free of all this; so that every thought of every thing, that had but a far-off and remote tendency unto the occasioning of the trouble, is enough to distract, disquiet and perplex the man (I do not mean here sins occasioning, or bringing on of trouble; for these should be thought on and mourned for; which will not marre this surable frame of Spirit; but other things, about which our thoughts are more readily conversant, in such a time:) and beside these thoughts of what hath been done, or not done, in times by past, there are other thoughts of what may yet further be, and how that may be prevented, which may not a little unhinge and disquiet the soul. Now from all such is the soul freed, by the beleev'ing thoughts of God's eternal Decree concerning their trouble, and all the way of its coming to passe, and the occasion, and all other circumstances,

stances, how and by whom, it was brought on. Here the soul will finde such a satisfying subject of Meditation, that other disquieting thoughts will be quickly hush'd to the door, and the soul will finde no leasure for them.

6. Hereby will the soul be kepted from poreing upon, and too much eying of the motions of the under-wheels of Creatures, and instruments of the trouble and calamitie, which will rather cause a reeling, and giddiness, and hence occasion a staggering and falling, than any stayedness or establishment; because hereby the soul will be brought to fix its eye upon that one wheel of the Lords, that moveth evenly fixedly, and invariably, in the midst of all the wheels of men, the motions whereof are so irregular, eccentric, and so opposite and contrarious one to another.

7. Hereby is the beleever helped to win to that life of tasting and feeling the sweet of that serenity of soul, that a filial disposition possesseth the man of, by an holy, humble, son-like submission and subjection of soul unto the good will of the Lord: When this submission is yeilded unto, the Supream will of God, upon Christian Grounds and Considerations, the soul is in a manner brought into the suburbs of heaven,

It is the decreed will of God. 27

ven, and enjoyeth an heavenly serenity and peace of minde, whereby it is in case to sing under all its sorrowful pressures, and the confused noise of such as are the Agents and Instruments of all the calamity; and the beleaving thoughts of the Sovereigne will of God, ordering and appointing all, is a singular help hereunto.

8. The beleever is hereby put without the reach of many a Temptation, and is strengthened against them; whether to use unwarrantable means to be delivered from the Trouble and Distress incumbent; or to prevent, what may be further imminent, and is to be feared; or to vent his displeasure against the Instruments of all the calamity; or the like: for here will be an antidote at hand, The Lord ordereth and disposeth of all things, according to His own holy and wise will: and nothing can come to passe, but what He hath decreed; and what He hath decreed shall come to passe, and that when, and neither sooner nor later, and how, and by whom He hath decreed, and no otherwayes; what have I then more to do, but to minde my present duty, and welcome what the Lord's will determineth for me, will he say.

There are these Three particulars, which set home this Consideration, and promou-

eth thereupon this work of Submission, and hearty acquiescing unto the will and determination of God ; and which should be thought upon to this end.

1. The Lord is in all his Determinations and Decrees unalterable , as he is unchangeable in himself , there being no variableness or shadow of turning with Him *Jam. 1. vers. 17.* And if it were otherwise , He could not be infinitely Wise in himself, or not Almighty, and Irresistible by others ; for any alteration , that might be in the determinations of his will, must either flow from new and second thoughts in himself : and so He were not Intinitely wise , or from inability to effectuat or through his former Determinations , and therefore must take new measures ; and so He were not Almighty. Now the Soul should think with it self , Should I wish , or desire , that the Lord's will were not done , that He should not be able to do whatsoever he will *Psal. 115: 3.* and *135 6* or that any of his everlasting Purposes and Decrees should fail, and not take effect ; or that He should alter his purposes and lay his conclusions of new ? Then I should wish , He were not God ; For the true God is a God that changeth not *Mal. 3: 6.* and a God , whose Purposes cannot fail ; for they have a hand with them

It is the decreed will of God. 29

them to effectuat all *Efsai.* 14:26. as he pur-
 poseth, so shall it stand *Efsa* 14:24. Who can
 disanull what He purposeth? *Verf.* 27. And
 what he purposeth, he will also do *Efsai.* 46:
 v.11. So that if I should once imagine, that
 His decrees could alter upon one account,
 or other, I should in so far deny the true &
 living God. And if one of his purposes could
 alter, why not another? & how then should
 I think, that his purpose according to electi-
 on should stand? *Rom.* 9:11. & 8:28. *Epbes.* 1:
 v.11. & 3:10, 11. 2 *Tim.* 1:9. And if there
 were the least ground of doubt here, where
 were all my Hop, Comfort & Confidence?
 Therefore would the beleever say; Because
 it is my joy & comfort, that His purposes
 fail not, and that He is a God that cannot
 change, but whom he loveth, he loveth
 to the end; therefore will I with joy sub-
 ject my self unto all his decreed Dispensa-
 tions towards me, how hard so ever they
 may seem to flesh; because He is Unchang-
 able and Almighty, and thereupon hang-
 eth all my Hope and Salvation.

2. All his determinations and decrees are
 for his own glory. He worketh all things,
 according to the Counsel of his own will,
 that we should be to the praise of his Glory
Epbes. 1:11, 12. He maketh all things for
 Himself *Prov.* 16:4. Hence the beleaving

foul reasoneth with himself, Shall I stand in the way of God's getting his glory? He hath determined this to befall me, for his own glory; and should I wish it to be other-ways? Should I not comply with his holy designe of glorifying himself, by this his Dispensation towards me? Should I not acquiesce in all the meanes and methods, His infinit wisdom hath thought upon, and He, in infinite wisdom, hath determined to make use of, for glorifying of his own name? Should not I be satisfied with his being exalted? Nay, should not this Consideration, that hereby God will be glorified, make mine heart sing under all my sorrow: & cause me conclude all my meditations on His dispensations towards me, as Paul did his Discourse *Rom. 11. For of him, & through him, & to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen. v. last.*

3: As all that God hath decreed to do in the world, is for his own glory; so all that he hath determined to do with, or to bring upon His own people, who are called according to the election of grace, is for their good, according to that *Rom. 8: 28. And we know, that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are so called according to his purpose.* Hence the Godly Soul can reason, Shall I be against mine own good and advantage? Shall I
 wish

It is the decreed will of God. 31

wish that things were otherwise, than they are, when the only Wise and Gracious God hath ordered and ordained them so, for my good? He hath made many noble connexions, in his Purposes, that I see not: and seeing He hath said, that all things work together for good to such as love Him, and are called according to his purpose, why should I not beleeve against sense and carnal reason? Am I able to search out the Almighty unto perfection? Can I finde out all the depths of his Counsel and Wisdom? Shall I think then that he can bring about my good and felicity, by no meanes, and dispensations, but such as I am satisfied with? Shall I measure the unsearchable riches of his Wisdom and Counsel thus? Shall I rebell against his Dispensations, and fret and murmur against Him, who dealeth thus and thus with me, because I see not, how He can bring about my everlasting advantage hereby? No: Nay rather because his word is true, beleeving the same, I will embrace the sharpest of Dispensations, He is pleased to tryt me with, and waite to see how infinit Wisdom shall make good, what Truth it self hath said:

Thus we see, how the Consideration of the decreed will of God can preserve the Christians life, in worst of times.

CONSIDERATION. IX.

It is the Commanding will of God.

CHristian souls have much Peace, and joy, when they are going about a commanded duty, and they know upon good grounds, that what they are going about is a commanded duty, notwithstanding of the many Hazards, Difficulties, Pinches and Distresses, they are put to, in the prosecution thereof: and when they are called to suffer, and to lye under outward Trouble and Affliction, are oftentimes under much sadness of heart, and disquietment of mind, upon this account, among others, That they know not, if their suffering be according to the will of God, and whether or not they have ground to expect God's approbation; which if they saw clear ground to beleeve and look for, they would be no more disquieted, than when going about other clear and necessary duties. It will be useful therefore and advantagious to such, as meet with a suffering life, to know some thing, whereby they may come to understand, how and what way they may,

It is God's Commanding will. 33

may, or may not be called of God to suffer.

I grant, that Suffering, as it is a meer *passion*, doth not properly fall under a command: But the Choosing, Embracing, patient, cheerful, courageous and Christian Enduring of Sufferings and Affliction fall under a command; and this is all the subject of our present enquire, That we may know, when we are to judge our selves called of God to choose Affliction with the people of God, and to undergo it with courage and patience, knowing that in so doing, we are approven of God.

In order therefore to the clearing up of this, we would know, That as there is a time, when God calleth to valiant acting and appearing and bazzarding lives and fortunes, and all for Him, and His interest, and to jeopard our lives, on the high places in the field, and to come forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty, as we would escape the Curse of *Meroz* *Judg.* 5: 23. So there is a time, when He, who only can change seas and times, calleth for Valiant Suffering and to become a companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ. And this appeareth from these particulars.

1. There is a particular gift of God for this Suffering, as wee see *Phil. 1. vers. 29.* *Unto you it is given not only to beleve on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* And when God giveth a gift for such a peculiar work, it saith, there is a time and season, when that gift is to be imployed and exercised, for he giveth not gifts to lye by us and rust, or to be hid in a napkin under ground.

2. There are peculiar duties called-for at the hands of Christians, relative only or thainly unto a suffering time; as *Taking up the Cross*, *Patience*, *Being faithful unto the death Revel. 2: 10.* *Holding fast Christ's name, and not denying his faith Vers. 13.* *Keeping Christs works unto the end Vers. 26.* *Keeping of Christs word, and not denying his name, Revel. 3. v. 8.* *Keeping the word of Christs patience V. 10.* *Keeping fast and not casting away our Confidence Heb. 10: 35.* and the like: All which say, there is a time for suffering, and witnessing to the truth by suffering.

3. The many motives and encouragements given to bear up the hearts of sufferers, say, that the people of God have such a lot to look for, and must lay their account to meet with Trials and Tribulations for adhering to truth.

4. The many Instances and examples of valiant and stedfast Sufferers before us, recorded

It is God's Commanding will. 35

corded for our Instruction, and Information, say, there is such a season, wherein such, as would stand fast in the faith, can look for nothing but sharp trials for the Name of Jesus.

5. The forewarnings given to such, as will follow Christ, to take up withall their cross Mat. 16: 24. And that through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God, Act. 14: 22. And that all who will live godly, in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution 2 Tim. 3. vers. 12. That we should not think strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try us, as though some strange thing hapned unto us 1 Per. 4. vers. 12. These and the like confirme this matter.

6. Christ, the Captaine of our Salvation, was made perfect through sufferings Heb. 2: 10. & He himself hath told us Mat. 10: 24, 25 That the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord, & that, it is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, & the Servant as his Lord: & that, if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? And we are bidden look unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, despising the shame: And to consider him, that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and

sainte in our mindes, Hebr. 12: 2, 3. And we are told 1 Petr. 2: 21. That even bereunto we are called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. And againe Chap. 4: 1. Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, we should arme our selves likewise with the same mind. All which and the like say, that a Suffering lot is abiding the followers of Jesus; and that it is the will of God they should prepare for it.

7. Some special works there are, which God hath upon the wheels to perfect, and these call for a suffering season; such as the trial and discovery of the sincerity of His grace in His own, as also the exercise and promoting thereof; for tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hop. Rom. 5: 3, 4. So the trying of faith worketh patience 1am. 1: 3. See also 1 Pet. 1. vers. 7. and 4: 12. As also the discovery of the rottenness and hypocrisie of a Professing generation, who want root, and so must wither, when the scorching sun of persecution ariseth Mat. 13: 5, 21. For this is as a small sieve. So also the discovery of the Maliciousness and wickedness of Enemies, which lay hid and latent, before it got a seasonable vent, when their hour and power of darkness cometh. Luk. 22: 53.

8. This

It is God's Commanding will. 37

8. This may be confirmed by expresse Testimonies of Scripture, such as 1 Pet. 2. vers. 19, 20, 21. *For this is thank-worthy (or grace) if a man for conscience toward God, endure griefe, suffering wrongfully. — But if when ye do well & suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable (or grace, or favour) with God. For even hereunto were ye called.* It must then be a commanded duty, and obedience to a command, that rendereth a man gracious and acceptable with God. So 1 Pet. 4: 19. *Wherefore let them that suffer, according to the will of God. &c.* this is according to his will of command. So Heb. 10: 39. *The will of God, there mentioned, is, as we explained it, his will of command, which was done by enduring patiently, for the Profession of the truth, a whole fight of afflictions; their patient suffering being noble service to their Lord and Master.* By all which we see, that there are some times and seasons, wherein the people of God are called to suffer.

If it be enquired. When is that Time and Season, wherein the people of the Lord are called to suffer? The answer is easie: *to wit*, when the red horse (spoken of Revel. 6: 4.) is sent forth, and power is given to him, that sitteth thereon, to take peace

from the earth; and for that end, hath given unto him a great sword; that is, when Truth and the Profession thereof is persecuted; when Tribulation or Persecution ariseth because of the Word; as it is *Mat. 13: 26*. When men must be slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimonie, which they hold *Revel. 6: 9*. When the Truth and the open Profession thereof, is questioned and opposed, then are the followers of Christ called to suffer rather than to sin, and upon all hazards to hold fast the Profession of their faith without wavering, not forsaking even the assembling of themselves together *Heb. 10: 23, 25*. Then are they to make Moses's choice; that is, chuse rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season *Heb. 11: 25*. When any of the revealed Truthes of God are opposed, and such as owne the same are maligned, hated and persecuted, that is the Season, wherein the Lord calleth all His to embrace any suffering, rather than deny His Truth, and the word of His Patience. It is spoken to the commendation of the Church of *Pergamos Revel. 2. vers. 13*. That though dwelling where Sarans seat was, yet she held fast Christ's Name, and did not deny His faith, even in these daies, wherein Antipas, Christ's

It is God's Commanding will. 39

Christ's faithful Martyr, was slain. So that it is Christ's will and command, that all his followers should abide stedfast, faithful and unmovable in owning of his Truth and Cause, his Word and Interest, on all hazards.

But some will possibly enquire, How shall I know, whether or not, I in particular be called to suffer? *Answer.* We are not to expect any extraordinary Revelation, or Declaration of God's mind, in this particular; though I grant, the Lord may condescend, in love and pity to some weak persons, to give some more than ordinary intimation of his will, whether by some secret and forcible impulse upon their Spirits; or by some influence of comfort and encouragement, whereby they are enabled to despise the shame, and to endure the cross, as seeing the joy set before them; and are strengthened against the feares of men, even of the greatest and most terrible, as seeing Him, who is Invisible. But these outflowings of his Love and Tenderneſs, not being the Rule of our duty, we must not think, that we are never called to hazard on suffering, untill we meet with some such Dispensation of his free grace. Nor must we waite for some singular Intimation, made by some more than ordinary light, given
to

to discover the Truth, and the Importance thereof, for owning of which we are exposed to suffering; The Revelation of the Truth, made by Jesus Christ, in his Word, is the only ground of our faith, & our faith thereunto is called for, though we want such rare communications of Light, bearing home the soul-captivating perswasion of the Truth & its concerns, over all possibility of doubting or hesitating in the least; for these are not our Ground or Rule of faith, but soveraigne and special helps to strengthen our faith, and to fix us more upon our ground. But the ground of our Suffering, and that which we should look upon as a call from God, to choose suffering, is the Lord's command, to owne and avow His Truth: so that when the Lord, in His Holy and Wise Providence, ordereth matters so, as that we must either suffer, or sin, in denying His word, or any point of Truth, revealed in his word; and so either Suffer or forsake our Duty; then are we to look upon our selves, as called of God to choose suffering, rather than sin: When, as it were, Sin and Suffering are laid before us, that we may make our choise, and there is no third thing to demurre us, nor any faire and lawful way to escape the suffering, but by sinning; then with Moses in that forecited

Commanding will of God. 41

cited place, *Heb. 11: 25*. We are to preferre Suffering before Sinning, and that according to the will of God. This deed of *Moses*, in chusing rather to suffer a miction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, was a rare Act of faith; and consequently an act of obedience; faith being no blind act, but walking upon the ground of a command. When then we can not evite suffering, but by sinning in denying the Truth, or in not adhering to it, or not Professing of it, according to the will of God, we suffer for well doing. This is it, that is acceptable unto God, and that to which we are called, *to wit* That we take it patiently, when we do well and suffer for it. This is to endure grief, suffering wrongfully, for conscience towards God, and which is thankworthie *1 Pet. 2. vers. 19, 20, 21*.

Hence we see, that it must be Truth, and the Word of Christ, that must be suffered for; else we cannot be said to suffer for Conscience towards God, nor for well doing. If a Person be under the Power of an Erroneous Conscience, taking that for Truth, which is nothing but Errour, his suffering in defence thereof, and for adhering thereto, is not suffering for well doing, nor for conscience towards God, nor have
such

such any call from God to suffer upon that account; and yet if, for fear of suffering, any such should deny that, which they apprehended to be truth, they should virtually deny the truth of God, and sinne; because they should deny that, which they took to be the truth of God; and if it had been really the truth of God, they would have denied it, no less than now they have done, though they did mistakingly apprehend it to be the truth of God, when it was not. In this case, there is no preventing of sin, but by laying by the blinded and erroneous Conscience; that is, by laying aside the mistake and errour, and receiving right Information concerning the Truth. And therefore, when a time of trial cometh, and persecution ariseth upon the account of the Testimony of Jesus, and of his Word, all, who would be found faithful in that day of trial, should labour to have the Word dwelling in them richly, to be rooted and grounded in the Truth, to be receiving and drinking in the Truthes of God, and to have all grounded upon the infallible Word of Truth, that what they owne and hold may be the sure and undoubted Truth of Jesus, and so a part of his Testimony. And for this Cause, they would be living neer to Him, who is the Truth, that being taught
of

Commanding will of God. 43

of Him, and receiving the Truth, as it is in Jesus, they may be in case to assert and owne the same, upon all hazards, and so fitted for witnessing to the Truth, and for holding fast Christs Word; and nothing else.

But some may say, Though we know and beleve the Truth, that is opposed: Yet we are not able to maintaine it against learned Adversaries, nor to answer their contrary Arguments and Objections; How can we suffer upon the account of such a piece of truth, which we have not skill and understanding to defend against cunning Adversaries? I *Ans.* Though it is true, Men of great parts, and abilities to plead and argue for truth, would seem to have a great advantage, in such a day of trial; yet experience proveth, that such as are far inferior unto them, as to parts and abilities, will be helped to faithful witness-bearing to the Truth, when they may shamefully decline that Duty. Suffering is a peculiar gift, & doth not alwayes accompany the gift of learning. And I doubt, it be required of all Christians, to be able to dispute for the truth, and to answer all the Sophismes of cunning Adversaries; yet it is required of all, that they contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered unto the
Saints

Saints *Jud. 3.* and that they stand fast in the faith, *1 Cor. 16: 13.* and in the Lord *Phil. 4: v. 1. 1 Thes. 3: 8.* and hold fast Christs Name and the Word of his Patience, and not deny his Faith and Name *Revel. 2: 10, 13, and 3: v. 8, 10.* and that they keep his Word *Revel. 3: 8.* It is the Duty of all to receive the Truth, and the Love of the Truth; and when the truth in its Love and Loveliness is received, then it sincketh into the heart; and such, though they cannot Disput for the Truth, yet can suffer for it; and not deny it, upon any termes. Though they have but a little strength, yet they will keep his Word, as is spoken to the Commendation of the Church of *Philadelphia Revel. 3: v. 8.* Truth is Truth, though we be not able to defend it against Sophisters, and to stop the mouth of gaine-sayers, and the Truth, as it is in Jesus, and as it is a part of his Testimonie, who is the Truth, should be owned and maintained by suffering. The Primitive Christians, who suffered martyrdom for the Truth, were not all able to answer the Cavils and Sophismes of a *Celsus* and a *Porphyrie*, and others, who imployed their learning and parts against the Truth; yet having received the love of the truth, and embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ, no sufferings nor torments could

move

Commanding will of God. 45

move them to a forsaking or denying of the same; They did keep Christs word, and would not deny his Name.

But may some say, what if the point of Truth, upon which I am questioned and staged, be but small, and of no great consequence, and many moe than I do so judge it; must I hazard on suffering, upon the account thereof, and think that God will accept of me therein? *Answer.* Let the point of truth be never so small and inconsiderable, whether in thine own eyes, or in the eyes of others; yet it being a part of the Truth of God, and of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, it is a part of that Name of Christ's, which should not be denied; and of that Word, which should be kept. Satan may move Persecuters to urge but small things at the beginning, that thereby he may make way to greater; knowing that if once Professors cede in smaller matters, they are the fairer to be prevailed with in greater things; for having forsaken the Lord in lesser, they are out of the ordinary rode of meeting with promised help and assistance, when they are questioned upon greater things. Who love Truth for Truth's sake, and upon the account that it is the Truth of Jesus, will love the last of divine truths, and therefore will not deny it, because

because it is a part of the Name of Christ, every part whereof is sweet and desirable unto the gracious soul. On the other hand, who forsake and deny Truth, because it is small, and inconsiderable, will hold no Truth, as the Name and Word of Christ, and so will be faire to deny the greatest; who suffer not for the Truth, as it is the Truth, and because it is the Truth of Christ, cannot be said to suffer for conscience toward God, and as holding fast the Name of Jesus, and the word of his patience. And such as are willing to suffer for the Truth, upon this account, will suffer upon all Truth, how small so ever it may seem to be, if it be a part of the word of His Testimony. The Testimonie to the Truth is not to be estimat, according to the greatness or weightiness of the Truth, upon which the Testimony is called for; but rather on the contrary, that may be accounted a great Testimony, which is for a small Truth (to speak comparatively, for indeed no part of Christ's truth should be accounted small) because it argueth great love to the Truth, and Zeal for it; it argueth much singleness, and honesty; and so is much to the glory of God: such as are thus faithful in a very little, may be much esteemed of by the Lord, and have rule over many cities. The
denying

denying of or not witnessing unto the meanest 1 ruth, in a stated case of Confession, is a being ashamed of Christ and of his Truth; and who are ashamed of or deny Him before Men, He will deny them before His Father, which is in heaven. The least sin must not be committed to shun suffering; but the denying of, or not bearing witness unto any of the Truthes of Christ, in a day of trial, is no small iniquity: and therefore (as we said) we are to look upon our selves as called of God to suffer, when we can not avoid it but by sinning.

Yet some may say, when the thing required is manifestly sinful and unrighteous, the call to suffering rather, in that case, seemeth very clear and unquestionable; and when it is so, the person may have much peace and calmness within, but when the question seemeth more disputable, the call must needs be less clear, that one hath to suffer upon that account; and an unclear call cannot but creat much perturbation of mind, and perplexity. *Ans.* A call may be Gods call, wherein or whereabout, there may be much unclearness: It is said of Abraham Heb. 11: 8. *That by faith, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, he obeyed, and went out, though, as it is added, not knowing*

ing whither he went. It seemeth good in the Lord's eyes, not to make every ones call alike clear and unquestionable, that their faith and obedience may be the more tried. Some have their call to suffering written, as it were, with sun-beames, so clearly and distinctly, that he who runneth may read it: others have their duty and call written with smaller letters, which every one cannot read; and yet this be no lets the call of God, than the other. The call which the three Children had to suffer, was clear and unquestionable; it being such an act of manifest Idolatry which was enjoyned them; that none acquainted with the law of God, could have the least scruple, touching its horrid iniquity; The call againe which *Moses* had, rather to suffer, than to be called the Son of *Pharaohs* Daughter, would seem not to have been so legible and clear to all; and yet it was the true call of God, for by faith he obeyed this call. So *Daniel's* call to hazard rather on the lions, than forbear prayer to the God of heaven, seemeth more clear and legible than *Mordecai's* call to hazard his own life, and the life of all the Jewes, before he would bow, and do reverence unto *Haman* the *Amalakite* and yet this was found to be the true call of God. In the primitive times, the case seemed

seemed clear and unquestionable, when Christians were commanded to renounce Christianity, to give up their Bibles, as renouncing the same, or to burne incense to Idols, or to build a Temple to Idols, or suffer death; but when their life was offered unto them, on condition, they would but give any old paper or clout, in stead of the poors coats; or would give a small summe of money, wherewith to helpe to build the temple to the Idol God, one would think their call to suffer was more dark: and yet these worthy witnesses would not redeem their life at such a rate: Yea, if the souldiers, weary in executing of them, should have violently plucked any such thing from them against their wills, as desirous of the smallest seeming Victory, they would not consent, but run after them declaring their adherence to the truth; and *Marcus Arethusius* would not give one penny to the building of the Idol Temple.

If it be said, But what if by some Imprudent, or Unnecessary act or other, I have occasioned the trial and trouble to my self; Can I in this case suppose, that I am called of God to suffer. *I Ans.* It is true, that some unnecessary, or not every way commendable act or other, may give the first rise or occasion to our trouble; and yet when suffer-

ings are not purely upon that account, nor for that cause: but stated upon another ground; we may notwithstanding of this imprudent or unnecessary occasioning of the trial to ourselves, look upon ourselves as called of God to suffer, rather than to deny Him, or any part of His Truth. It is observed by some of *Paul*, that the occasion of his last trouble, mentioned *Ast. 21.* to wit his hearkening to the advice of *James* and the Elders of *Jerusalem*, was a thing which he might well have forborne, yea and refused, and therein have walked consonant unto both his former Doctrine, Practice and Writtings, by all which, before this time, he had declared, that the Ceremonial Law was not obliging; Christ, the special end and substance of all these shadows, being now come, and having established the Gospel way of worship: and others; though they will not blame *Paul*, nor think he dissembled in what he did, yet they think *James* and the rest should have forborne to have pressed him to do what they urged him to do. Yet we see, that notwithstanding of this, which gave the rise and occasion to these his last sufferings, this not being the ground, or cause, for which he was persecuted; but his maintainance of the Gospel, and opposing of the necessary

Commanding will of God. 51

ry observation of the Law of Moses, which was now abrogate, he is in all his sufferings, which followed hereupon, owned of God, and approved of him.

If it be said, Though I dar not deny the Truth, upon which I am challenged and staged, nor dar I say, but I am suffering for Truth, and that I could not have shunned this affliction, but by sinning; yet I am made to doubt of God's call and warrand, because He hideth his face from me, yea He hideth himself from me, more than ever. This causeth me suspect, that all is worg; and that I have run, in this matter, without his warrand and allowance. I

Ans. This is no certaine ground, whereupon to draw such a conclusion. These out-lettings of his free grace, and sensible significations of his favour, are dispensed according to the Sovereignty of his will and pleasure. A person therefore may have an unquestionable call and warrand to hazard on suffering, when he cannot other-ways do, unless he would sinne, though he misse these soul-comforting, and heart-establishing blinks of His face. How oft do we finde the Saints of God in Scripture, cry out of the hiding of God's face, when outward trouble was lying heavy upon them? As in *Job* and *David*; and why may

not the Lord dispense thus with others? I grant the Trial and the Exercise is, upon this account, the greater: but what do we know, but the Lord be ordering matters so, in his holy wisdom, for our further trial, and for the exercise of faith? It is easie to swime (we say) when the head is born up above the water. And if the Lord thinketh good to double our Trials, ought we not sweetly to submit? His word should satisfie us; and He hath promised enough to him, that overcometh: We ought to remember our duty, that is, hold fast what we have, till he come, and He will come quickly, *Revel. 2. vers. 25. and 3. vers. 11.* If He will have us venturing upon faith, why should we not glorifie him thereby? He knoweth, when the fittest season is of intimating his favour and acceptance. That holy martyr, that complained of this want, all the time he was in prison, yet while going to the stake was made to cry out, *He is come, He is come.*

Let us now speak a word unto the improving of this Consideration, to the end, we may see, how it can contribute unto life, in an evil time.

I. This Consideration may calme and quiet the Sufferer, and may make him enjoy peace within, whatever trouble he meet with

Commanding will of God. 53

with from without ; because , hereby he understandeth , that he is about his Master's work , he is following dutie , and walking in a commanded path , whatever trouble he meet with ther-in : So whatever other thing occurre , to cause disquietment , this may bear him thorow all , that he is in the way of duty , and obeying the command of the great Lord and Law-giver. Christians use to pacifie their own spirits with this , when they meet with unexpected crosses and disappointments , That they were following their duty : So this may quiet them under all their Tossings , Troubles , Persecutions and Vexations , that they have sinfully occasioned none of these things , nor by their sin and folly brought them on themselves.

2. When on-lookers are ready to condemne them of Foolly , Rashness, Inconsideratness , Pertinaciousness, and the like, this Consideration , That they are about a commanded duty , may counterballance all ; for then they may know , that whoever condemne them , their Lord and Master will approve of them ; and how ever men construe of their doings , He will account their Sufferings loyal and faithful service to Him.

3. The consideration of this will helpe
B 3 the

the Beleever to a life of Patience and Submission, without fretting at their lot: for sure the honest beleever hath engaged himself unto God, and hath promised absolute obedience unto him in all things, and to take up his cross and yoke, whatever it be, that God shall think good to appointe for him: and without all doubt, he is to have respect to all the commands of God, and is obliged to carry as a Son and as a Servant; and therefore must willingly and with sweet submission do any piece of service, that is laid upon him, & go about any commanded duty with cheerfulness, because it is commanded, how unpleasant so ever it be to the flesh. The honest beleever will say, I have given up my self to His service, and count it my glory to be called, the Servant of God; and why should I not go willingly and cheerfully, and with heart and hand, without all repineing or murmuring, about any piece of service He is pleased to put in my hand? I made no reserves nor exceptions, when I resigned and gave up my self unto Him; and why should I not now submit to all He commandeth? Sure, it is He who is Lord and Master, and so must command and give-out orders; I am but a servant, a sworn-servant, and am highly advanced, when I am called and
account-

Commanding will of God. 55

accounted a servant to him, and therefore must not carve-out my own work, and service, but be under Authority, and go and abide, or do this or that, or bear this or that burden, as commanded. It is not seemly for a childe, or for a servant, or for a souldier to quarrel with his Father, Master, or Commander, for putting him to any piece of service; but rather sweetly to acquiesce, and run cheerfully about what is commanded: And (should the beleever say) it is more unseemly for me to quarrel with God, who is my Father, Master, and Commander, upon a more noble and substantial an account, for any piece of service He putteth in my hands: I never covenanted with Him, upon condition, He should not call me to suffering, or put any piece of service in my hand, that was not easie and sweet to the flesh. So that the Consideration of this would certainly move to submission, and shoot-out all contrary thoughts, which distract and disquiet the soul, and make his spirit bitter, and his life less lively and comfortable.

4. Hereby would the beleever be helped to a life of Patience and Long suffering, under the Trial and Tribulation, when continuing long, and like yet to continue longer, without fainting or wearying: for

the honest soul would think with it self, I should not weary of prayer, nor of hearing the word, nor of any other religious duty; and why should I weary of the cross, seeing the bearing of it, christianly and handsomely, is as much my duty, and an act of obedience to Him, when He calleth thereunto, as is Prayer, or the like, in their season. There is a time, when He calleth for valiant acting, there is also a time, when He calleth for Christian suffering; and every thing is beautiful in its season: and if the season be longer, than we would desire; yet the Supreme Lord of Times and Seasons, He knoweth better than I, how long such a season should endure; and so long as He thinketh fit to appointe the season, so long is the duty seasonable and pleasant, that is called for in that season.

5. This would also help forward the inward Satisfaction of the Believer; for hereby he might see, that how unworthy and inconsiderable soever he thought his own sufferings; yet the Lord would get glory thereby; seeing he might easily understand, that the Lord would set him about no employment or service, but such as would be for his own glory: the husband man will not command his servants to plow-up some
tumber

cumberſome piece of ground wherein they muſt meet with much labour and toyl, if he ſaw not how to reap ſome fruit thereby; nor will God ſet any of His ſervants about an irkſome piece of work, if he ſaw not advantage to be had thereby to his Name, Inter-eſt and Glory: The faith of this, That God will get glory by their ſufferings, that being a piece of work He hath put them about, who doth nothing in vaine, and whoſe glory is advanced by our obedience to His commands, will quiet the heart of the honeſt beleever, while he is ſweating in tugging and toiling at that troubleſome work. And when ſuch thoughts as theſe prove troubleſome unto the honeſt heart-ed beleever, Alas I am out of caſe now, while thus ſhut up in priſon, to go about my Chriſtian duties, with my Chriſtian Neighbours, wherein I was wont to re-joyce, and God was glorified; I cannot get Him now ſo ſerved and glorified, and his praifes ſolemnly ſung, in the publick Aſſemblies of his people. This may ſatisfie and comfort him. That now he is called unto this piece of ſervice, and by his Chriſtian deportment herein, God will be as much glorified, as He was by his Chriſtian exerciſes, while at liberty; That now he hath as good occaſion, to advance in his

Principal work of glorifying God, though upon another account, as when he was imployed in the most solemne service, that Christians are called to.

6. This consideration will also promote their life of inward Contentment and Satisfaction, under their suffering lot, in that they will thereby be helped to see, that as God will thereby get his due rent of praise and glory (as we said :) so their own spiritual advantage and spiritual life will be promoted thereby, if they foolishly hinder it not by their unchristian deportment under the crosse. All obedience hath a native tendency to promote the spiritual good of Christians, they walk and go from strength to strength, in the pathes of obedience, The doing of God's will is the exercise of the Christian life, and the Christian's life is made more and more lively by this exercise: So that, all these Tribulations, or Afflictions, are so far from hindering their spiritual growth and advancement in grace, that on the contrary they promote the same, when the Christian is helped, through grace, to yeeld obedience unto the good will of God, in undergoing that lot and dispensation, in a Christian manner, even because the Christian is then in the way of
God,

Commanding will of God. 59

God, and carrying as a submissive obedient Son and Servant ought to do.

7. Hereby, (which will also prove advantageous to their spiritual life) they will see, How Satan is disappointed of the two great Ends, he aimeth at, in raising up Persecution against the people of God: *to wit*, the dishonour of God, and the hurt and undoing of the Child of God; neither of which he can attain by this mean: for when Afflictions, Distresses, Tribulation and Persecution are borne, in way of obedience to the holy will of God, and the soul is sweetly complying therewith, as its present duty, both God is glorified, and the Christian soul is edified, as by all other Christian duties; and thus Satan is disappointed. Sure, this can not but yeeld much peace and comfort unto the suffering beleever, under all his hardships and sore pressures.

8. This Consideration, if rightly improved, could not but make the suffering beleever sing and rejoyce, with Paul and Silas, while in prison *Act. 16. vers. 25.* and with the Apostles, when shamefully beaten *Act. 1. vers. 40, 41.* Because, they cannot but say, that their hearts are glade and rejoyce within them (if they be not under the power of some evil frame) when they are

about known duty ; and that what they do they do with a piece of joy and gladness , when they reflect upon it , as a commanded duty , and remember how therein they are doing the will of their Father , and running His errands : and why should they not be also glade and rejoice in their sufferings , when they may know , that therein they are also about the will of their Father , and actually evidencing their Loyalty , Faithfulness , Subjection , and Obedience to Him ?

9. This Consideration may also quiet the honest-hearted Believer , when troubled with these or the like thoughts , That now he cannot get God so served as he was wont to do ; He cannot get such a good work begun or perfected , which he had intended for the publik good ; He cannot get the spiritual good of others , Neighbours and Relations , so promoted , as he would desire. From this , I say , the Believer may draw grounds of peace to his own soul , & hush these perturbing thoughts to the door : because the Lord is not now calling for these works at his hands ; but is now calling for another duty , wherein if he carry himself aright , God will be no less glorified , than by all that work , which he Intended : nay , this being the present duty , and piece of work now put in his hand

by

It is God's Commanding will. 61

by God, the doing thereof aright will more glorifie God: And therefore this should allay all their sorrow and griefe, which they finde upon their disappointments, and cause them sweetly comply with the present duty, and account that best, which He accounteth best.

10. Seing in choosing affliction rather than sin, they are about a commanded duty, and doing the will of God; they have the same ground of hope, that the Lord shall enable them thereunto; and by his grace carry them thorow, that they have, as to other duties; the same Covenant-Grounds, and Covenant-promises reach all duties, and excepte none; so that this very Consideration may raise the soul in hope, & may encourage the man to goe to Christ by faith, and lean to him for seasonable strength and supplies of grace, for through-bearing in the duty; and through Him, expect to be accepted of the Father, in the discharge of the duty.

CONSIDERATION. X.

Afflictions are all ruled and over-
ruled by a good hand of Pro-
vidence, which is alwayes
in and about them.

MAny a time the Beleever, when swim-
ing thorow a sea of trouble and afflic-
tion, and finding no sensible in-come of
reliefe, or mitigation of the calamity, cry-
eth out with the Church *Eesai. 49. vers. 14.*
— *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God
hath forgotten me: And as it is Eesai. 40. v. 27.*
*My way is hid from the Lord. He hath left
me alone, in this sea of trouble, as for-
getting that I am into this wrestling and
fighting posture: He hath turned his back
upon me, and seemeth unconcerned with
all that is come upon me, and yet is lying
heavy on me. He considereth neither my
weakness, nor the strength and violence of
the Temptation, under which I am, and
which is like to overwhelme me. Hence
he crieth out with David Psal. 31. vers. 12.*
I am forgotten, as a dead man out of minde:
*And againe Psal. 42. vers. 9. Why hast thou
forgotten me; It is certaine, such sad com-
plaints*

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 63

plaints are not altogether justifiable, as they proceed from men, in whom is so much corruption and unbeleef (though in our blessed Lord, while on the cross, such a sentence, as, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* was free of all mud or unbelief) for though they express the ardencie of their desires to have the Lord smiling upon them; yet there is some admixture of dross in them; and they hint, at least, that they apprehend God is at a distance, taking little notice of them, or of their present condition, but withdrawing his helping hand, or delaying to send reliefe, as not caring, how great their Affliction be, or how their Enemies trade them under foot. Hence we see, what corruptions are ready to stirre and work in the beleever, at such a time: And the faith of God's being alwayes present with them, while under the trial, and ordering all things, in the dispensation, with a fatherly care and tenderness, would comfort them, and ease their mind, in the saddest of their distress. It may therefore be of use to speak a little unto this *Consideration*.

In order therefore to the clearing-up of this *Consideration*, for the end intended, we shall.

- I. Show, that the Lord indeed hath an
high

high and holy hand, in all such dispensations, as prove sad and grievous afflictions unto the godly.

2. We shall endeavour to expaine and clear, how and what way the hand of the Lord is in and about these afflictions; only with an eye to our present designe.

3. We shall briefly pointe-out the way how this Consideration should be improv'd; in the time of Affliction and Tribulation.

As to the *first*, That God hath an holy and high over-ruling hand in and over the afflictions, and crosses, that his people meet with. This is past all doubt and dispute, as to some of them; such as *poverty*, through God's immediat hand, blasting mens labours and endeavours, or taking away their goods by sea, or by fire, or destroying their cattel by death: and *sickness* upon their bodies, or *death of friends and relations*, and the like. In such, every one will grant, that God hath an hand, and every wise Christian will look upon them (as the Centurion, that great Beleever, did, *Mat. 8. vers. 8, 9.*) as God's Servants and Souldiers under his command and Authority, to go and return, as He enjoineth. But as to other afflictions, brought about by the Instruments and Under-agents of Satan, maliciously set to persecute the
 Godly,

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 65

Godly, in their Name, Liberty, Goods, Life, or Conscience, though none of Gods Children, when they are in their right mindes, & at themselves, will deny the Sovereigne over ruling hand of Providence; yet while under Temptation, & wrestling with the calamity, they will be found too ready to think and speak that, which is not very consistent with the lively faith and perswasion of this Sovereigne Truth, we shall therefore in a few words confirme it, from the Scriptures.

1. We finde that the Godly have looked on these sad afflictions, brought about by wicked hands, out of wicked purposes and designs, as coming from God principally; and have eyed God, as having a principal holy hand in the same. The affliction, that Joseph met with, was sad, when he was sold by his own Brethren; & though it was they that had sold him, & that out of wickedness and maice; yet he saith Gen. 45: 8. to them. *It was not you, that sent me hither, but God. He saith the Lord to be the principal disposer of all; & therefore saith Gen. 45 5. — God sent me before you, to preserve life. And againe Gen. 50. vers. 26. But as for you, ye thought evil against me, God meant it unto God, to bring to passe, as it is this day, to save much people alive. It was likewise a great affliction to David, to be scourged with the tra-*
torous

torous tongue of *Shimei*, railing upon him, when he was flying from the face of his Son *Abſalom*: and calling him a *Man of blood*, & a *Man of Belial*; and ſaying to him, *the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the houſe of Saul, in whoſe ſtead thou haſt reigned* — And behold thou art taken to thy miſchiſe, becauſe thou art a bloody man. 2. Sam. 16: 5, 6, 7, 8. Yet holy *David* obſerved an higher hand in all this, and therefore ſaid *Verſ. 10.* So let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe *David*. Who ſhall then ſay, wherefore haſt thou done ſo? And *Verſ. 11.* againe Let him alone, and let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him. He taketh up *God's* hand in the buſineſs: as principally ordering the matter. So *Job* when the *Sabeans* and *Caldeans* had robbed him of his goods; ſaid nevertheleſs *Job 1. verſ. 21.* Naked came I out of my Mothers womb, and naked ſhall I returne thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: bleſſed be the name of the Lord: He looketh over Inſtruments, and ſeeth above them an higher hand over-ruling all, and ordering all, according to His ſoveraigne will and pleaſure. See alſo *Pſ. 44. v. 11, 12.* and *89: 39.*

2. The Lord himſelf by his Prophets ſignifieth ſo much: and, as it were, looketh upon the deed of theſe wicked Inſtruments,

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 67

ments, as His own; because of His principal holy hand therein, ordering all to His own holy ends. Thus he saith by *Amos 3:6.*

—— *Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it. So Esai. 45. vers. 7. I forme light and creat darkness, I make peace and creat evil: I the Lord do all these things.* Darkness then and evil and sad dispensations are from the Lord Creator: He formeth and maketh these things, according to his own mind. Likewise *Jer. 18:11.* — *Thus saith the Lord, behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you.* A remarkable passage we have *2. Sam. 12: vers. 11, 12.* Thus saith the Lord, behold I wil raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives, before thine eyes, and give them unto thy Neighbour; and he shall be with thy wives, in the sight of this sun: for thou didst this secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And this accordingly was done by that wicked wretch *Ab-salom 2. Sam. 16. vers. 22.* And because of the high, holy and soveraigne hand, which God had in this sore affliction, He saith by *Nathan the Prophet*, that He would do it.

3. We finde in the Scriptures, that the wicked Enemies, in following & profecuring their malicious designs against the
People

People of God, are held forth, and spoken of, as God's Instruments, in that work; As *Esa. 10. vers. 5.* Where the *Assyrian* is called *the rod of God's anger*; and *the staff in their hand*, is said to be *His indignation*. So *Vers. 15.* They are compared to an *ax* in the hand of him, that heweth therewith; and to a *saw*, to a *rod* and to a *staff*, all which (we know) can do nothing, but as moved and ordered by the principal Actor. To the same sense, are they compared to a *rasour*, wherewith God will shave the head and the haire of the feet, and the beard *Esa. 7. vers. 20.* Thus is *Babylon* called a *golden cup* in the hand of the Lord *Jer. 51. vers. 7.* Likewise the Enemies are compared to a *net*, which God will spread over his people *Hos. 7. v. 12.* and to a *snare* *Ezek. 12. vers. 13.* They are likewise called *God's sword* *Psal. 17. vers. 13.* and *His hand* *vers. 14.* All which and the like expressions show, That God hath a principal hand, in the afflictions, which his people meet with at the hands of wicked Instruments; and that the wicked are but as so many Instruments and Lixes, imployed by him, for that effect, howbeit they minde no such thing, but drive on their own designs, to satisfie their own wicked lusts.

4. The Scripture speaketh of the Lord,

as

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 69

as raising up these wicked Instruments, as leavying them, and sending them to execute his will. So *Eesai. 5. vers. 26.* And He will lift up an Ensign to the Nations from far, and will blisse unto them from the end of the earth, and behold they shall come with speed swift. So *Eesai. 7. vers. 18.* And it shall come to passe, in that day, that the Lord shall blisse for the flie, that is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of *Egypt*; and for the bee, that is in the Land of *Assyria*. By which we understand, that as these Enemies cannot stir, notwithstanding of all their malice, rage and anger against the Lord's people, till God send for them, and hisse for them, and (as it were) subscribe and seal their commission; so they are wholly at his disposal; as the armie is at the disposal of the General, or of him, who leavyeth them, and employeth them. In like manner, we read *1 Chron. 5. vers. 26.* that the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of *Pul*, King of *Assyria*, against the *Reubenites*, the *Gadites*, and the half tribe of *Manasseh*. So it is said *Psal. 105. vers. 25.* That God turned the heart of the *Egyptians* to hate his people, and to deal subtilly with his servants. And *2 Chron. 21. vers. 16.* that he stirred up against *Jeboam* the spirit of the *Philistines*, and of the *Arabians*, that were neer the *Ethiophians*.

5. We

5. We finde the Lord said frequently to deliver up his people into the hands of these Enemies, and to sell them unto them, & as it were to give them wholly up to their devotion and disposal; see *Judg.* 3: 8. and 4. *vers.* 2. and 6. *vers.* 1. and 10: 7. *Dan.* 1: 2. 2 *King.* 17. *vers.* 20. Thereby showing, that these Enemies could do nothing against the people of God, untill the Lord had permitted the same, and given way thereto, and had (as it were) withdrawn his protection, and taken away his hedge of defence, and so left them naked and exposed unto the rage and cruelty of their brutish Enemies.

6 This is also manifest from the grand and noble Purposes and Designs, which the Lord bringeth about by those meanes, far different from what these wicked Instruments intend; as we see *Gen* 45. and 50 *Joseph's* Brethren meant evil against him; but God meant it for good. So *Esa.* 10. *vers.* 7. The *Affyrian* meaneth not so, as God doth, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few: but the Lord hath another work upon mount *Zion* and on *Jerusalem* *Vers.* 12. to wit, to punish them, only by his smiting with a rod, and lifting up his staff, after the manner of *Egypt* *V.* 24.

or

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 71

or (as it is *Eesai. 27: 9.*) to purge away the iniquity of Jacob, and to take away sin. Wherefore seeing the Lord hath such sovereign ends, as the chastisement and trial of his people, the exercise of their graces &c. to bring about, He cannot but have a special hand in and about the means, which serve to bring about these ends. This being sufficient to cleare up what was *first* to be spoken to, we come

Secondly to speak a little of the manner and way, how the hand of the Lord is to be observed in and about the sharpe afflictions of his people, by the hand of wicked persons, who are active therein. And in speaking to this, we shall wave all subtile debates, concerning God's Decreeing the event of sin, His Predetermination, and His Concurrence with second causes, in those Actions, which are sinful; and shall onely pitch upon some particulars, which are more plaine and undeniable, and also more useful to the point in hand. As

I There is the Lord's holy *permission*, giving way to, and not restraining the furie, and rage of Enemies, when He hath a mind to make use of them for a scourge; He must loose, as it were, the chaine, with which they are bound and restrained; and take away the hedge of protection, wherewith he

he guardeth and protecteth his people, and all that belongs to them. Satan could do nothing against *Job*, nor stirre so much as one lambs tail, that belonged to him, untill the Lord, for holy and wise ends, gave way thereunto; therefore he said unto the Lord *Job* 1. vers. 10. *Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side?* This is also imported, in the Lords giving up his people into the hands of Enemies, and selling them and delivering them, as a judge doth a Malefactor into the hand of the Executioner. Yet we must not conceive of this Permission, as if it were in all things like unto the bare & naked permissions of men; but as futable to him, who is a most pure and simple Act.

2. There is herein considerable the Lord's *Commission*, to speak so: not that He will warrant and approve of them, in their wickedness, or give them any moral Authority or Power thereunto: but that in his active providence, He hath such a soveraigne and supream hand, and all these wicked agents do so depend upon Him, as they cannot stir, or move, till he give (as it were) the sigre, and a Providential call and commission; as souldiers can not set upon a Citie, or the Eremie, or give an assault,

assault, or charge untill the General give the word of command. Thus the Lord behoved to say to Saran, ere he could trouble *Job*, *Behold all that he hath is in thy power*: and againe, *Behold he is in thy hand*, *Job* 1. vers. 12. and 2. vers. 6. This is it which *David's* words, concerning *Shimei*, import, when he said, *The Lord hath said unto him, curse David*. The lying Spirit in the mouth of *Ahab's* false Prophets, could not go forth to deceive *Ahab*, that he might fall at *Ramoth Gilead*, till the Lord had said, *Thou shalt perswade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so* 1 *King*. 22: 22.

3. There is the Lord's fitting (as it were) and qualifying them for the work, by so ordering things, in his Holy and Sovereigne Providence, that they are enabled to carry on their purposes, and to do what they are imployed in, and to performe the work, they are set about: *Absalom* could not have been such a crosse and plague to his father, *David*: as to chase him from his Throne and Kingdom, unless he had gotte the power of the Countrey upon his side, and such a numerous army to back him: and whence was this, but from the Lord, in his holy Justice and Sovereignty? *Nebuchadnezzar* could not have been the hammer of the earth, if the Lord, in his holy Providence,

D

had

had not given him great power and might for that end. Hence Christ said to Pilat *Job. 19. vers. 11. Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.* Pilat was boasting of his power and place, and supposed, that he could do what he pleased, and that he had full power over Christ, to crucifie him, or to set him at liberty, as he pleased; but he boasted of that, which he was not Master of, for Christ tels him, whence his power came, and that he had no more, than the Supreme Lord and Governour, the absolute Disposer of all things, was pleased to grant.

4. There is the Lord's ordering and fixing the Beginning of the Trouble, which necessarily followeth upon the foregoing Acts; so as the Enemies, for all their heat and rage, cannot touch one hair of God's Children, nor work them the least trouble, before the time come, that the Lord hath appointed, and that He (as it were) appoint them to beginne, and give the signe. The wicked are as so many rampant and devouring lions, longing earnestly for their prey, but God hath them so chained, and muzzled, that they can neither bark nor bite, till He give way. Early did Herod beginne to seek the life of our Lord Jesus, while He

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 75

He was but a childe in the swedling clothes; and oft did his Enemies attempt his hurt, and seek advantage against Him, but all in vaine; for his houre was not yet come: Hence it was, that when the Pharisees told him, that Herod was seeking his life, He answered Luk. 13. vers. 32, 33. *Go tell that fox, behold, I cast out Devils, and do cures, to day, and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected: Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* Jesus Christ, the angel, that ascended (in vision to Iohn Revel 7. vers. 2, 3.) from the East, having the seal of the living God, cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the Earth and the Sea; saying, *hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God:* So that there is a restraining power, keeping up from hurting untill the set time come.

5. There is the Lord's determining and specifying the nature and kinde of the Trouble, with which His people must be exercised; and herein His determining and ordering Providence appeareth. The Enemy would be at death, and no less will satisfie them; but He will order it so, that they shall not get their will; & therefore will suffer them to do no more than to cast the man in

prison, or confine him, or fine him, and spoile him of his goods. The Devil would have been at no less, than *Job's* life, when he said *Job* 2. *vers.* 4. *Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life:* But the Lord would not grant this, but said, *save his life Vers.* 6. And suffered him only to smite him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

6. There is the Lord's careful Providential measuring-out the quantity of the Trouble, like a faithful and painful Physician, who will himself measure the quantity of the physick, he is to prescribe unto his dear Son, or Daughter, and will not commit it unto the Apothecary, who possibly may more consult his own advantage, than the good of the patient. Our Lord weigheth the affliction in his own just balances. Enemies may think to ruine and undo all; but our God, who setteth bounds to the sea, limiteth their rage; and will suffer them to do no more, than He thinketh good. The plowers plow, and make long their furrowes, upon the back of God's People, and many a time they afflict them; yet they prevail not against them; why? the Lord cuts asunder the cords of the wicked, *Psal.* 129: 1, 2, 3, 4.

7. The Lord's hand of Providence appeareth,

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 77

peareth, in mixing together the several ingredients, that make up their cup of affliction. Many a time the Lords people have a complicated crosse, as we see in *Job*, *David*, *Heman* and others; and it is the Lord, who weaveth and warpeth these crosses together; Satan and his Instruments are but His drudges, blowing at the furnace; and therefore the Godly fixe their eye mainly upon God; as knowing, that He ordereth all to his own mind, and no one ingredient more can be put into their cup, than He will.

8. The hand of the Lord appeareth, in his suiting the Trouble or Calamity, unto their case and necessity. As a wise Physician considereth the Temper and Constitution of the patient, and taketh special notice of the nature of the disease, and accordingly frameth the Medicine: So the Lord considereth the case of his people, and what humores and corruptions are most predominant in their souls: and accordingly ordereth and prepareth such medicinal afflictions, as are fittest to purge-out these peccant humores: and hence there is a necessity for such sharpe Medicines, as the Lord maketh use of, *1 Pet. 1. vers. 6 Wherein ye greatly reioice, though now for a season. (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through manifold*

Sold temptations. Heaviness, or Sadness, through temptations, and manifold temptations, was necessary to their condition, The Lord saw, that their case called for it, otherwayes he had not exercised them thus.

9. So the hand of the Lord is manifest, in making the affliction answerable to their strength. A potion may be fit for and suitable to the disease, yet may be too strong for the weak patient, and more readily kill, than cure: therefore a wise and tender Physician will take good notice of the patients present strength. So the Lord, who is tender of His peoples welfare, will proportion the Physick of affliction unto their strength. Hence we hear it said, 1 Cor. 10. vers. 13. ——— But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, above that you are able. Accordingly Jeremiah prayeth Chap. 10. v. 24. O Lord correct me, but with judgement, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing. The Lord's way is to correct his people in measure, Jer 30. vers. 11. and 46. vers. 28. And as a father pitieth them, that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth we are dust, Psa'. 103. vers. 13, 14. He knoweth that their strength is not the strength of stones, nor are their bones of brass; and so he knoweth they are not able to bear

bear many blowes. Thus we see, the Lord measures the affliction to their strength: It is true, *Paul* saith 2 Cor. 1. vers. 8. That he and his companions were pressed out of measure, and above strength: which would seem to contradict what is said; But this seeming contradiction will be taken away, by what we shall next adde.

10. When the affliction and distress is such, as would undo, and presse the poor Beleever out of measure, if he got not some new supply of strength to stand under that burden; the Lord's hand appeareth, in fitting the Beleever for the stroke, and in enabling him to bear it, so that he is not killed thereby, nor overwhelmed therewith; by giving cordials, he fortieth the man against the violence of Temptations, which otherwise would prevail against him: *Paul* and his Company 2 Cor. 1. vers. 8, 9. were pressed with trouble in *Asia*, out of measure, above strength, so much that they despaired even of life, yea and had the sentence of death in themselves; such a storme was it, that they could not ride it out, if fresh supplies of strength and courage had not been granted by God, who raiseth the dead, unto them: and if the Lord had not thus delivered them from so great a death, they had perished; but how

was this done? See *Vers. 4, 5.* The God of all comfort comforted them, in all their tribulations; and as the sufferings of Christ abounded in them, so their consolation also abounded by Christ: And thus the Lord fitted them for the stroke, when the stroke was too sore for them. So this same Apostle, when assaulted with a messenger of Satan, that buffeted him *2 Cor. 12. vers. 7.* Was strengthened by the grace of God, *Vers. 9.* to stand out against that temptation, which otherwise had overcome him, as his praying thrice, that it might depart from him *Vers. 8.* would import. Thus the Lord keepeth the head of his poor people above water, by making his power to rest upon them, and by making perfect his strength in their weakness, *Vers. 9.* Thus also are they strong, when weak *Vers. 10.*

II. The Lord's good hand of Providence appeareth in this matter, in disappointing the Enemies of their malicious designs; They are busie plotting and contriving the ruine and destruction of His people; but the more they seek to destroy them, the more they grow and thrive, the more they multiply, and the stronger they become. It is almost incredible, what multitudes of Christians, through the whole Empire, the bloody persecuting Emperours destroyed
and

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 81

and put to death, in the primitive times; but the more they were massacred, the more they grew; the blood of the saints and martyres, was the seed of the Church. *Daniel's* adversaries thought to have gote him destroyed; but their enmity and rage against him tended to his further exaltation and establishment. So was it with *David*, the more that *Saul* did persecute him, the more his bow abode in strength.

12. The Lord's hand mightily appeareth in the afflictions of his people, in that He powerfully and Infallibly carrieth on, and bringeth to passe His own Purposes and Designs, countermining and counter working the designs and wicked projects of the Enemies; yea, in effectuating His own ends, even by what the Enemies are doing purposely to carry on their Ends. When the Enemies are blowing with all their might, to make the furnace burn hot, that the metal, as they suppose and intend, may be wholly consumed; the Lord by that same meanes is infallibly bringing about His Ends, and accomplishing His designs; *to wit*, to purge the metal, and take away the drosse. By what the *Affyrrian* was doing, in prosecution of his Ends, *to wit*, to destroy and cut off nations not a few *Eesai. 10. vers. 7.* The Lord was performing his whole

work upon mount Zion and Jerusalem, Vers. 12. and what was this, but to purge away iniquity, and to take away sin, Esai. 27. vers. 9? to chasten and punish for correction and amendment Jer. 30: 11. and 46: 28.

13. Herein also appeareth the Lord's over-ruling hand, that while possibly the trouble is in its greatest strength, and Enemies are swelling in their pride, and thinking their contrivances cannot fail, their plots and designs are laid so deep and so sure, that they cannot misgive; even then the Lord will make a door of outgate appear unto his people, and give some forerunning tokens of the dawning of a fair day; even then, He will make a way for an escape, that they may be able to bear it 1 Cor. 10. vers. 13.

14. Lastly, His hand appeareth herein, that in due time, He putteth a period to the trial and trouble, by delivering his people out of them all Psal. 34. vers. 7, 17, 19. He will not suffer the rod of the wicked to rest alwayes on the back of the righteous Psal. 125. vers. 3. He will not contend for ever, lest the spirits should fail before him, and the souls, which he hath made Esai. 57. vers. 16. He will keep His people no longer under Physick, than He seeth necessary; and therefore it is but for a season, that his people are in heaviness.

vineſs. 1 Pet. 1. verſ. 6. Enemies think to keep the people of God at under for ever; but the Lord's ſupream over-ruling hand appeareth here, that He hath limited the duration of the trial and trouble to *Ten dayes Revel. 2. verſ. 10.* He hath limited the rage of Enemies to *an hour, a day, a moneth and a year Revel. 9. verſ 15.* And the treading of the holy city under foot to *42. moneths Revel. 11: 2.* And when the Lord's time cometh, all the power and malice of the Enemies will not be able to hinder the delivery; and how little ſo ever His own people look for it, yet He will work it: ſo that though there be ſcarce faith upon the Earth, yet He will come, and perfect what He hath intended.

We come now to ſpeak a little to the 3. particular, *to wit,* To ſhew how this Conſideration may and ought to be improven to advantage, in a time of affliction. And

1. The faith and right thoughts of this Truth, That the Lord ruleth and over-ruleth all that the wicked are deviſing and executing, according to their own luſt and rage, to afflict, perſecute and deſtroy His people, according to His own mind, would yeeld comfort and encouragment unto His people, be their trouble what it would. In a time of Trouble, there are ſeveral thoughts,

that come in the minde of H's people, which occasion Discouragment and Sorrow; all which this *Consideration* of God's over-ruling hand, if rightly improven, would either prevent, or keep them from the hurt of; so that notwithstanding of these, they were in case to rejoyce, and to sing, as

(1.) When they think upon the Instruments of their calamitie, they are ready to pore too much on them, and to look upon them, as if there were none above them, to marshal and order them, to command and over-rule them; as people are terrified by souldiers, that are under no Command or Discipline, and expect no pity, or favour from them. But the faith of God's being above their heads, to over-see and over-awe them, would free the Child of God from this discouragment. He would not be so cast down and affrighted, if he beleev'd, that God hath all these wicked Instruments, more under his command, than the best disciplin'd souldiers are under the Command of the most strick and awfull General, that ever was. These Instruments cannot move a finger without God. Souldiers, when out of the sight of their Commanders, may do much mischiefes; and their Commanders cannot hinder it, because they know not of it: But neither Devils,

Devils, nor the most wicked of his Instruments, can move one haire of God's people, till the Lord give way, and permit it to be done, He must first loose the raignes, or they cannot move a foot. becau't they are chained hand & foot, in the chaines of his Providence; yea their very tongue is chained, that they cannot so much, as curse or reproach any of His people, untill the Lord loose their tongues, and say, (as it were) go curse and raile upon such an one.

(2.) When they observe the Confusion, Irregularity, Brutishness and Unreasonableness of these Enemies, in their way and actions; they are ready to think, that God hath forsaken the earth, and is unconcerned with what these wretches were doing; and upon this they cannot but be much fainted and discouraged. But the faith of this, that God is working hitherto *Job. 5. vers. 17.* and that these wicked Instruments of their calamity were under his eye, would free them of this misapprehension. Nay, they would beleeve, and by faith see, a divine Order and Regularity, in the midst of the greatest Confusions, & brutish Massacres, that ever were; if they beleeved that God had a principal hand in all these Actions, Moving, Ruling, Ordering

dering and Over-ruling all, according to His own mind.

(3.) The consideration of the Activity, Diligence, Malice, Restlessness and Malicious wickedness of the Enemies, troubleth them, and maketh them fear, that ere ever they be aware, they shall be swallowed up. But this discouragement would vanish, if they remembered and beleaved, that the timing of their affliction is not in the hand of their Enemies. They cannot stirre, till their commission be (as it were) subscribed; and the houre and minute appointed come, when they must beginne; He, who is Supream, determineth the season, and the time; and over-ruleth all so, that were the hunger and desire of these ravenous wolves never so great, they cannot attempt any destruction, till the minute appointed come.

(4.) Whenthey consider the exceeding great Rage and Cruelty of their Enemies, they are ready to think, that sure, they will make havock of all, they will destroy utterly, and make an end of all. But how terrible so ever this thought be, yet its terrour is weakened, when the beleever calleth this to minde, That it will not be as these enraged and merciless Beasts intend; but as God will, who is the Sovereigne

raigne Disposer of all, and Supream Master of work; they are but under-Agents, and the Instrument in His hand: They are no Master of themselves, in this matter; but as the ax and saw, in the hand of the workman, that cannot cut, but as he ordereth it: The child will not be afraid of a sword, or of an ax, when he seeth it is in the hand of his father. Their threatnings are not much to be regarded; They have said, *come and let us out them off from being a nation, that the Name of Israel may be no more in remembrance as it is Psal. 83. vers. 4.* But they have not yet gotten it done. They intend Destruction; and therefore breath-forth nothing but cruelty; but God, who is above them, intendeth but Correction, and some Chastisement, and will suffer them to do no more, than may contribute to that end.

(5.) The thoughts of the strength and liveliness of the Enemies create also terrour and fear; they see their power decayeth not, but groweth rather, and their number increaseth, and thence they are ready to inferre, There shall be no outgate: But a sight of God, as neer (as David prayeth, when he took such a look of his Enemies, Psal. 78. vers. 19, 21. saying *But mine Enemies are lively, they are strong, and they shall have*

hate me wrongfully are multiplied —
Forsake me not, O Lord; O my God, be not far from me) would help in this case; the Believer would not be much cast down for all this; for he would be in case to say, They must be kepted up, so long as God hath work for them. as a man will keep his ax and his saw sharpe and clear, so long as he mindeth to make use of them: but all their strength saith not, that there shall be no outgate; when the Lord hath finished his work in Zion, he will punish the fruite of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks: And the Lord of hosts will send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory, he shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire *Eesai. 10. vers. 12, 16.* And for as strong as they are, the Lord can raile up a scourge against them; as *Eesai. 10: 26.* yea and make the light of Israel for a fire, and his holy one for a flame, and it shall burne and devoure their thornes, and their briers, in one day, and shall consume the glory of their forest, and fruitful field &c. as *Eesai. 10. vers. 17, 18.*

(6.) But even this proveth sometimes fainting and discouraging unto his people, That it is not man, that they have to do with, but with God principally, whoever be the Instruments; and that upon several accounts;

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 89

accounts; as because He is a God of Might, of Power, and of Terrour; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God; and withall He is just, and they are conscious to themselves of much guilt. But yet, notwithstanding of this, the thoughts of Gods having a principal hand in all these afflictions, may keep from fainting, because (1.) He is not intending their destruction, as Enemies do; but their Good, their Amendement, their Repentance, and Returning unto the Lord &c. (2.) He measureth not out their affliction, according to his strength and almighty Power, else He should soon crush them, and bring them to nothing. *Will He plead against me (said Job Chap. 23. vers. 6.) with his great power? No, but He will put strength in me.* (3.) Nor according to strict Justice, and pure Wrath. *In plenty of justice, He will not afflict; as the words of Elihu Job 37. vers. 23. may be read. He will not stir up all his wrath, Psal. 78. vers. 38.* (4.) Nor according to their deservings; for that word of Zophar holdeth true Job 11. vers. 6. *God exacteth of thee, less than thine iniquity deserueth.* And Psal. 103. vers. 10. *He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.* (5.) Nor doth the Lord deal with them, as Enemies; the difference is

is great betwixt his dealing with the one and with the other *Eſai. 17. verſ. 7.* *Hath He ſmitten him, as He ſmote thoſe that ſmote him? is he ſlaine according to the ſlaughter of them, that are ſlain by him?* But on the contrary, He dealeth with them, according to a rule of Mercy, and fatherly Compaſſion; for as a Father pitieth his Children, and only chaſtleneth them; ſo doth the Lord deal with them. He knoweth what they can bear, and layeth no more upon them, than they are able to bear. The wiſe Prophet tels us *Prov. 12. verſ. 10.* *That the righteous man regardeth the life of his beaſt, and therefore will not overcharge him with a load, heavier than he can bear: And will not the righteous Lord regard the life of his own ſervants? Are they not of much more value, than many beaſts? Sure then, He will not overcharge them.* *1. Cor. 10. verſ. 13*

2. The beleeving and right conſideration of this Truth, That God over-ruleth and diſpoſeth of, and ordereth afflictions, as He ſeeth good, would much help unto the life of *Patience*, which is ſo commendable *ſam. 5. verſ. 11.* Being a piece of the honour and badge of Saints *Revel. 13: 10. and 14. verſ. 12.* and ſo much taken notice of by God *Revel. 2. verſ. 2, 19.* Yea and profi-

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 91

profitable, having its perfect work *Lam. 1. vers. 4.* and bringing happiness with it *Lam. 5: 11.* This Consideration (I say) rightly Improven, may help hereunto; for it will fortifie the soul of the Beleever against those thoughts, which usually occasion impatience. as

(1.) When the man is poreing upon the uncouthness of the Affliction, wherewith he is exercised, and saying with the Church *Lam. 1. vers. 12. Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger,* he is ready to give way unto impatience. But when he considereth, who hath prepared this potion for him; that it was no unskilful Apothecary, it was not the malignant Enemy, that intended his death and destruction; but the only Wise and Supream God, who was seeking his good, his life and health, and who knew, that no other potion would suite his distemper, and purge out his peccant humores; this will helo him to lye under the workings of that physick with patience; Though the potion of physick be bitter, and work something hard, yet a wise man will have patience, when he considereth, that the Physician, who did appoint it, was both well skilled, and his special friend; and therefore perswadeth himself

himself, that no less would do him good: So when the beleever considereth, that it is His God and Father, who hath prepared that potion for him, and that He saw his distemper called for it, and when he considereth that God with his own hands did make and prepare it, weighed all the doses, with great carefulness, and mixed in nothing but what was most necessary, he will drink it, though bitter, with the better will: and albeit it work hard, and make him sick; yet he will not be impatient, and cry out, why am I so and so handled? doth every one get such paining & sickning physick, as this? but rather say, because every one needeth not such strong physick, I must be dealt with in a special manner; I have other corruptions, than ordinary, and therefore must have patience, and be content to be otherwise dealt with, than others usually are.

(2.) The person in affliction, when he seeth, himself compassed about with evils, and that he is not visited with one or two rodes, but with many at once; and that innumerable evils compass him about (as said David Psal. 40. vers. 12. which in part occasioned his adding, *therefore my heart faileth me, or forsaketh me.*) then he is ready to say, how can I, while thus invironed with evils, have

have patience? But if he would call to mind God's hand in the matter, as *Job* did, he would, with him, bless the name of the Lord; for then he would see, that God himself had ordered all, and that not one of all these multifarious evils came, without the Lord's special and active Permission, and Providential Ordination, Appointment and Commission: and that God alone had ordered that mixture, and combination of troubles and trials.

(3.) The impatience of Gods people is oft occasioned by their imagining, that the trouble is greater, than they can bear: as we see in *Job* Chap. 6. vers. 11, 12. *What is my strength, that I should hope! And what is mine end, that I should prolong my dayes? Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brasse. And againe Chap. 7. vers. 11, 12. Therefore I will not refraine my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?* But would they consider and beleieve, that God knoweth what they are able to bear, and is proportioning the load to their strength, which He knoweth, better than they do: or when He seeth it fit to presse them above measure, that they may despaire in themselves, and not trust in them-
selves

selves, that then He under-proppeth and supporteth the weak back, and conveyeth in secret strength, enabling them to stand, under the load; and thus never layeth more on, than they are able to bear: If (I say) they were calling this to mind, they would see no cause of Impatience; but rather cause of crying out, when we are weak, then are we strong, and therefore we will glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us 2 Cor. 12. vers. 9, 10. And they would through faith, be in case to say, with Pau' 2 Cor. 4. vers. 8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

(4.) Their Impatience is likewise occasioned by considering, that their Trouble and Affliction is still growing, when they supposed, that it should have decreased. But the right Improvement of this Truth would frame the Soul for patience, notwithstanding hereof: because the beleever would see ground to say, grow as it will, the hand of the Lord is about it; it will grow to no greater height, than he seeth good: let Enemies blow at the fire, as fast and with as great earnestness, as they will, the furnace shall be no hotter, than the Supream Master and Over-ruler of all,
seeth

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 95

seeth fit, for the ends He intenderth: He knoweth the nature of the mettall, and how hote a fire will serve the turn to purge it.

(5.) This also raiseth impatient thoughts in their heart, That they can see no appearance of an outgate; all doores are so shut, that no hope appeareth: thus was it with Job; & therefore hath he many such expressions: as Chap. 7. vers. 6. *My daies are swifter than a weavers shuttle, and are spent without hope. Vers. 7. — Mine eye shall no more see good. Vers. 8. The eye of him, that hath seen me, shall see me no more.* But this Impatience would evanish, if this were beleev'd, That the Lord's hand were in and about the affliction, making a faire way to a saife escape, and at length, in his own due time, putting a period to the Trouble: when his work is finished, & the end He designed attained: and if it were firm'y beleev'd, that, let Enemies make all as sure, as they can, and rage as they will, they shall not be able to keep them longer under their yron harrowes, than He seeth good, no not one day, nor an houre.

3. The right improvement of this Consideration would help unto an holy and sweet Submission, and cause us say with David Psal. 39. vers 9. *I was dumb, not opening*
ing

ing my mouth, because thou didst it. When Aaron met with a sad dispensation, two of his prime sones, Nadab and Abihu, were taken away in the flour of their age, and that in a very terrible manner, by fire from heaven, for their rashness; and when Moses told him *Levit. 10. vers. 3. That this was it, which the Lord spoke, saying, I will be sanctified of all them that come neer me.* it is said of him, *And Aaron held his peace.* A sight of the hand of God, though in a terrible manner, in that dispensation, made him lay his hand upon his mouth, and sit silent in the dust; He had not one word to say. So that a sight of the hand of God, in the dispensation, ordering all things in it, would help them unto a Christian, yea unto a cheerful Submission: It would not be *patience by force*; but an hearty, willing, cheerful choosing, bearing and embracing of that lot, because bound on their back by the hand of God. Shall we not drink (would they say) this potion with delight, that God hath prepared, and carefully made up for us? He knoweth what is best for us; Shall we not willingly lye under the crosse, that God hath tyed upon us, when He knoweth what He is doing, and what we must not want, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able? When His good time is come, there

there will be an end, and all the power of Enemies shall not obstruct our Delivery. The Church Micab. 7. vers. 9. could sweetly sit down, and bear the indignation of the Lord, when by faith she could say, *Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness, V. 8, 9.*

4. The beleiving improvment of this would keep the beleever from fainting, and sincking through discouragment: many thoughts come into the minde, while affliction is lying on their loines, and Satan can suggest many things, at that time, to cause the poor man succumb, while under the load: but the faith of God's Sovereigne and Absolute Ordering of all things, in and about the Trouble, according to his own mind, would keep up their head, and preserve them from a sinful and shameful fainting. They look too much to instruments, and pore too much upon their Nature, Disposition, Activity, Power, Wisdom, Wick- edness, Maliciousness, Rage, Cruelty, and Indefatigableness; and forget that they are but under agents, and can do nothing, but as the Supream God Willeth, Order- t he, Dispolet h, and Permitteth; and t hat He alone Over-ruleth all, Moderateth

and Ordereth all, according to His own mind, and for His own holy ends, So that they cannot do any thing, whether as to the Substance, or as to the Circumstances of the affliction, but as He, who is the Supreme Master of work, is pleased to suffer and give way unto.

5. The beleieving thoughts of this Truth would keep the Soul from that dreadful sin of Murmuring against the Lord, upon occasion of any Trouble or Distress, he meeteth with. It is the Lord, would the Soul say, and who am I, that I should quarrel with Him. He is ordering, disposing and moderating all, that under agents and lixes are doing, so that all things are done, as He will; and shall I yet be displeased and quarrellsome? Enemies cannot get their will, They are over-ruled, in all their Consultations, Projects, Contrivances, bloody Resolutions, and cruel Executions; matters go not, as they will, but as He will, who is over them; and why then should I murmur, and repine against Him?

6. This would also airth the Eyes of the soul towards the right object, in a day of Trouble. They would not with Heathens, look to chance or fortune, as ruling and ordering all; nor would they with the carnal

nal multitude fix their eye upon the instruments, and run with the dog to the stone, that is cast at him: but would see another more noble object of their sight, *to wit*, the Principal Agent, Mover, and Orderer of all, in whose hand the wicked are, as the ax and saw in the hand of the workman, and as the rod in the hand of the father; and this sight would help unto a Spiritual Christian frame of Godly fear & Subjection of Soul, and would put the soul in case, to observe the Wisdom, Sovereignty, and absolute Dominion of God, doing what He will, frustrating the tokens of the liars, and disappointing the craftie devices of wicked men; as also this sight would minde the man of Christian duties, of searching his wayes, repenting of his sinnes, and turning againe to the Lord; for he would see, it was the Lord, with whom he had to do. He would look for his Outgate and Salvation from God alone; so that his Faith, his Hope and his Confidence would be in the Lord alone. His eye being fixed on this object, he would not see cause of troubling himself much about Enemies, or how he might procure their favour; and so would be kept from Temptations to any sinful compliance or accommodation: So would he be preserved from temptations to the

using of unlawful meanes for an outgate. Thus we see, how advantagious this eyeing of the Lord, in the day of Trouble, is unto the afflicted; and the faith and improvement of this Consideration cannot but airth the soule eye unto this object. .

7. The right improving of this Truth would free the beleever from many carnal, disquieting, distracting and perplexing feares: He is ready to say; oh I cannot ride out this storme, I shall one day fall by the hand of *Saul*, the next blast of temptation shall blow me over, I cannot but at length faint and succumb, and the Enemie shall have matter of joy, and all Gods people shall be made to mourn: for were it beleevd, that God Ordered, Disposed, and Over-ruled all, the beleever would see no ground for these feares; for he would see, that no blast could blow, but as He would; no storme could come sooner, than He thought good; nor continue longer, than He saw convenient; nor be more violent and strong, let Enemies threaten and rage as they pleased, than He saw good: He would see the hand of God measuring out all, so as he needed not fear to be overcharged; or if the trouble were indeed greater, than he could well stand under, he

God over-ruleth Afflictions. 101

he might see the Lord sitting him by secret strength for it.

8. Finally the faith of this, and the right improvement of it would preserve the soul from a dead and senseless stupidity under the rod, or stoical frame, as unconcerned with what befallcth them, which hath no affinity with, but is utterly repugnant to, a Christian frame, and to Christian valour, and undaunted courage: This looketh liker to the frame of an Atheist, than of a Child of God, who trembleth and feareth; when he seeth the rod in his Fathers hand, and dar not despise the chastening of the Lord. Now a sight of God's hand in all, Ordering, Timeing and Seasoning, Mixing and Compounding, Limiting and Bounding, Qualifying and Restricking, Terminating and Ending, Directing and Over-ruling, would preserve the soul from a dead Temper, and cause him mark and observe the footsteps of Royal Sovereignty, Majesty, Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Care and Tenderneſs.

CONSIDERATION. XI.

Christ himself had a suffering life.

WHen the Leaders and Commanders of an Army, are to bring the Infantrie thorow some deep water, they use to alight off their horses, and walk on foot, that they may take a share of the same lot with the souldiers, that thereby they may the more encourage them to wade with cheerfulness thorow the water: and it proveth indeed some matter of Encouragement to souldiers to follow their Leaders, be the way never so uneasy. Our Lord Jesus, in like manner, who is called the Captaine of our Salvation *Hebr. 2. vers. 10.* knowing that his followers had both fire and water to go thorow *Eesai 43. vers. 2.* the more to encourage them, to endure that hard lot, would come down off his Throne of Majestie and State, and take a share of the lot himself; yea and go before them to break the ice. Therefore it cannot but be most advantageous for the souldiers of Christ, who have a mind to run the race, that is set before them,

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 103

them, to be looking, in the time of their affliction, upon this Captain, according to the advice, which the Apostle giveth unto the afflicted and persecuted Hebrews Chap. 12. vers. 2. *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of faith, who for the joy, that was set before Him, endured the cross, and despised the shame.* 3. *Consider Him, that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; lest ye be wearied and faine in your mindes.* For this same end and purpose do we finde the Apostle Peter proposing this example, for the encouragment of a number of poor scattered and afflicted saints 1 Petr. 2. vers. 21. *For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us; leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.* And againe, Chap. 3. vers. 17, 18. *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing: for Christ also hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.*

It will then be of no small advantage, to afflicted persons, to have this Copie and Example laid before them, if He would help us to speak unto it, in any measure to edification. It will not be necessary, to speak of this subject of Christ's Sufferings, in the full latitude; but it will be sufficient to speak of them, only in reference to the

end proposed; as an Encouraging Example; and in order to this, we shall only do these Two things. 1. We shall mention and propose some particulars, considerable in the sufferings of Christ, which may be suitable matter for the thoughts of a Child of God, in affliction, to dwell upon; 2. Speak some things to the advantagious improvement of the same, in a day of Trouble.

As to the first, we shall onely mention these particulars considerable.

1. The Person, who was put to all these Sufferings, was no ordinary person: we think more of the sufferings of a Noble-man Prince, King or great Potentate, than of the Sufferings of a mean, poor man. What shall we then think of the Sufferings of Christ, who was higher than the Princes of the earth, who was King of Kings and Lord of Lords? He was *in the form of God*, having the same Essential Divine form with the Father, He *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, having the same Divine Nature and Properties. Phil. 2. vers. 6. And yet for all this, He *made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the forme of a servant.* —

And being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross vers. 7, 8. Even He, who was the Ancient of dayes, who was set up from

Christ was a man of Sufferings. ¶ 105

from everlasting, from the beginning, ere ever the earth was Prov. 8. vers. 23. Even He was put to end his dayes in paine and sorrow, He, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting Mica. 5: 2. Who was the Creator of the ends of the earth, who was with God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made, t'at was made. Joh. 1. vers. 1, 2, 3. Even He it was, who was put to all this suffering. What a wonder is this, That the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, the mighty G^d, as He is called Esai. 9. vers. 6. should become a man of sorrowes, and acquainted with griefe Esai. 53: 3. That the High and holy one, who inhabiteth eternity, and whose perfections and vertues are past finding out, should be found in the fashion of a suffering Man. That God should be thus manifest in the flesh 1 Tim 3. vers. 16? This is a subject worthy of our thoughts, That He, who was God equal with the Father in power and glory, having the fulness of the God head dwelling in him bodily, Col. 2. vers. 9. should condescend so low, as to take on Him mans Nature, and suffer therein. It is true, the Divine Nature could not suffer: but his Humane Nature being personally united unto the Divine Nature, the Person was one; and so He, who was and is God over all,

bleſſed for ever, did ſuffer, while his humane Nature was put to ſuffer.

2. Conſider by whom He was put to ſuffer, even by all ranks of Perſons, both high and low, by rich and poor, by noble and ignoble, by Church-men and States-men, and by ſouldiers, by judges higher and lower, and by lixes, by Jewes and Romans. Some of whom were Malicious, Inveſtive, Cruel, Mercileſs and Irreconcilable Enemies; ſuch as the Priests, the Scribes and the Pharifees, who were ring-leaders; and did all out of pure malice and wickedneſs of heart, committing thereby that unpardonable ſin, *Mat. 12.v. 31, 32.* Theſe drove forward their cruel deſigne, and forced Pilat, in a manner, to condemne Him, though he found no fault in Him; and urged a late law of their own thereunto, ſaying *Joh. 19. verſ. 7. We have a law, and by our law he muſt die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God;* a ſtrange law, by which they had bound themſelves to condemne and purſue unto death the Meſſiah, whom they pretended to be waiting for, when ever he came; for the true Meſſiah was to be Immanuel: and when this was not like to work, their malice carrieth them further *Verſ. 12. ſaying If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæſars friend; for whoſoever maketh himſelf*

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 107

himself a King, speaketh against Caesar. Others of those his Persecuters were led on against Him, in their ignorance and blind Zeal, for Christ himself prayeth for them, saying *Luk. 23: 34. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And Peter saith *Act. 3: 17. And now, Brethren, I wot, that through ignorance you did it, as did also your Rulers.*

3. Consider the duration of his Troubles, they lasted not for a short time, for a few Dayes, or Moneths; but during this whole Life: For His whole Life was nothing but a Life of Suffering: no sooner came He into the world, but Herod sought his Life. He was forced to flee into *Aegypt*, being but a childe in the cradle. He was a Man of sorrowes, and acquainted with griefe *Esai. 53: vers. 3.* from the Cradle to the Grave, His Life was interwoven with sufferings of one kind and another; and especially after He entered into the publick exercise of His Offices, and was Baptized, He is not well out of one trouble, while He meeteth with another; How oft is He put to flee, and hide himself for his Life? How oft is He malign-ed, tempted, slandered, persecuted, called a Devil, hated and hunted, until He is at length condemned and killed?

4. Consider what it was that He suffered: It was not one kinde of Trouble and Affli-

ction, that He was exercised with; but in a manner all sorts came upon Him, He was a *Man of Sorrowes and acquainted with griefe*, He was oppressed and afflicted *Esai. 53: 3, 7.* He was despised and rejected of men *Esai. 53: 3.* He hid not his face from shame and spitting, but gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them, that plucked off the hair *Esai. 50: v. 6.* *Matth. 26: 67.* and *27: 26.* He was exercised with Hunger, Thirst, Weariness, Poverty, and the like. He was apprehended as a Thiefe or a Robber, Imprisoned, falsely Accused, Condemned, Scourged, and Crucified. He was mocked and reproached, by Words and Deeds, when they put a Crown of Thorns on His Head, clothed Him with a Rob, and put a Reed in His Hand, and bowed the knee before Him, saying, *Hail, King of the Jewes.*

5. Consider what, beside all this that He suffered in His Body and Name, He suffered in Soul, when He was in the Garden *Matth. 26: 37, 38.* Where He began to be sorrowful even unto Death: Yea so sad and heavy was He, that He cried out *Vers. 39* *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup passe from me:* And this He cried thrice over, which sheweth the vehemency of that pressure, under which He lay, at that time, when He was beginning to wrestle that bloody combat

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 109

combat with the Wrath of God, and to drink that galled Cup, wherein was the Law-curse, because of Sin. And all this was from the Hand of His Father; for it was He, *who bruised Him, and put Him to griefe Esai. 53: vers 10.* And it was He, who hid His face from Him; so that He cried out, while on the Cross, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And that when He was presently to give up the Ghost *Mat. 27: v. 46, 50.*

6. Consider how little outward Comfort of Friends or Relations He found, all this time: While He was sweating drops of Bloud, through the vehemencie of the bitter agonie, He was into, while in the Garden, He could not prevail with His Disciples to watch with Him, but one houre. And when He was apprehended by the treacherie of His own Disciple, who ate of His Bread, by *Judas the Traitour*, all His other Disciples forsook Him; Courageous *Peter* denied Him thrice, not without Oaths and Execrations; His loving and beloved Disciple *John* stood a far off; bleeding and sorrowful-hearted, *Mary*, His Mother, durst not come neer to Him: When the Shepherd was smitten, the Flock was scattered.

7. Consider how innocent He was,
E 7 He

He had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in His mouth *Esa. 53: 9.* Though He was just, yet was He put to suffer; *Pet. 3: v 18.* and *2: 22.* We know what false accusations were brought-in against Him; But by all their false witnesses, they could not get Him convict of sin: The Causes wherefore (as to men) He was judged and condemned were Glorious and Fundamental Truthes, such as His affirming that He was the Son of God, and that He was a King, though His Kingdom was not of this World; and therefore was not inconsistent with *Cæsars Kingdom Luk. 22: 70, 71. Job. 18: 36, 37.*

8. Yea not only had He done no wrong, but He was come about the most necessary and useful Business of the World, *to wit,* to save sinners. He was come to bear witness to the truth, and to lay down His Life for His People; He was come to save them from Sin and Destruction, by bearing the Wrath and Curse of God, that was due to sinners, in their stead, as being their Cautioner, and substitute by the Father, in their Room and Place. He was *Jesus*, the Saviour of His People: The Horn of Salvation for us, in the House of David, that we should be saved from our Enemies, and from the hand of all, that hate us, as *Zacharias*

Christ was a man of Sufferings. III

charias sung *Luk. 1: vers. 68, 69, 71, &c.* And yet notwithstanding that this was his errand, this was the welcome He got. He came unto His own, but they received Him not: He came to save them, from all their Enemies; and they dealt with Him, as with the Worst of Enemies; and were never at peace, until they had gotten Him crucified and buried.

9. Consider what a Death He was put to: It was not a simple Death, but a multiplied one: For being Crucified, He had (1.) a Painful Tormenting Death, a long lingering and painful Death, yea five Deaths at once, every nail bringing Death with it. (2.) He had a shameful Death, while thus Crucified, as a chiefe Malefactor, and hung-up betwixt two Theeves. (3.) He had a cursed Death; for the Law said, cursed is every one, that hangeth on a tree *Gal. 3: vers. 13. Deut. 21: 23.*

10. Consider for whose sakes all this suffering of His was: It was for the unjust *1 Pet. 3: vers. 18.* He bare our griefs, and carried our sorrowes; He was wounded for our Transgressions, the chastisement of our Peace was upon Him. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, for the transgression of his People was He smitten *Esai. 53: vers. 4, 5, 6, 8.* It was for Enemies that
Christ

Christ, died for sinners, and for the ungodly Rom. 5: 6, 8, 10.

21. Consider likewise how patiently He endured all this, *When He was reviled, He reviled not againe* 1 Pet. 2: vers. 23. He was brought, as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth: Yea though He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth Esai. 53: 7. When He was accused of the chiefe Priest and Elders, he answered nothing Matth. 27: vers. 12. Yea, when Pilas said unto Him, hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? He answered him to never a word, in so much that the Governour marvelled greatly vers. 13. When one of the Officers stroke Him with the Palme of His Hand, He only answered thus; *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?* Job. 18: 22, 23. We have heard of the Patience of Job, but withall also of much of his Impatience: But never was such Patience seen in any, as in Christ; never was there an Impatient Word heard out of His Mouth, even when the base Souldiers were reviling Him, spitting in His face, putting a Crown of Thornes on His Head, and a fools coat upon Him, and

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 113

and when scourging Him, buffetting Him,
Hoodwinking Him, and Mocking Him:
Yea when they were doing the worst they
could devise against Him; He said, *Father
forgive them, for they know not what they are
doing.*

12. Consider how willingly and chear-
fully He did undergo all, When He
knew, that the Priests Emissaries were
coming with the Traitour to apprehend
Him, He would not go out of the way;
nor suffer His Disciples to rescue Him;
yea He would not pray to His Father for
Angels help: *Thinkest thou* (said he to
Peter Matth. 26: 53.) *that I cannot now pray
to My Father, and he shall presently give me
more, than Twelve Legions of Angels.*
Vers. 54. *But how then shall the Scriptures be
fulfilled, that thus it must be.* Nay all the
Roman Souldiery could not have taken
His Life, if He had not been willing
Job. 10: vers. 17, 18. *Therefore doth my Fa-
ther love me, because I lay down my Life, that
I might take it againe. No man taketh it from
me, but I lay it down of my self. I have power
to lay it down, and I have power to take it
again: This Commandement have I receiv-
ed of my Father.* He had a Baptisme to
be Baptized with, and how was He strait-
ned,

ned, or pained, till it was accomplished? *Luk. 12: v. 50.* How offended was He at *Peter*, when he would have dissuaded Him from suffering, saying to Him, *Get thee behinde me, Satan Matth. 16: v. 23.* When He knew, the time was approaching, it is said, *He steadfastly set His face to go toward Jerusalem Luk. 9: 51.*

As to the *Second* thing here to be spoken to, the Advantageous Improvement of these Particulars, We shall only mention some Conclusions, which the right thoughts of these things, will helpe the Beleever to draw, in order to his possessing a life, in time of Afflictions and Persecutions: As

1. The Afflicted Beleever may say, I need not think it strange, that I am exercised with Afflictions, Temptations and Tribulations: It is no new or uncouth thing that is befallen me; the Captaine of my Salvation was thus, and worse handled; and who am I, that I should think to be excoemed from such a lot? Is it not enough, that the common Souldier be as his Captaine? Nay, will not the common Souldier be glade to share of the Captains lot of Hardship? And should not I rejoyce, that I am honoured to weare my Captains livery

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 115

Livery? His Life was a Life of lasting and growing trouble; and should not I be glade to follow Him, and drink of that Cup, whereof He drank? Affliction was no strange or uncouth thing to Him, and why should it be strange to me? Have I Him, even Him, set before me, for a Copie, and why should I not be most willing to write after this Copie?

2. Hence the Afflicted Beleever may Inference, I have so little cause to Complain of all that is befallen me, that, when I consider what Glorious Christ did meet with, I have great cause to Wonder, and Praise, that I am so gentlie dealt with: He hath been very tender towards me; when He might have made my lot much more sad: behold, how He hath pitied me, and considered my weakness. He hath not dealt with me, as He dealt with His own only begotten Son, Jesus Christ: His own dearly beloved Son was otherwayes exercised, than I have been: He had more sharpe Trials and Temptations, and sadder Exercises to rancountre with, beside the Wrath and fierie Indignation of God, that He had to wrestle with. How mercifully then hath God dealt with me, that

that *He* hath not made my *Torments* and *Grief* inward much more insupportable? *O!* When I read, how the *Holy* and *Just* One, the *Innocent* Lamb of *God*, was handled by *sinners*, through the *Holy* *Permission* and *Providence* of *God*, and lay my petty troubles in the *Ballance* with these, how am I made to wonder, that the *Lord* hath not dealt otherwise with me a *sinner*; and to cry out, who am I that I should have been stroaked with such a gentle *Hand*? Who am I, that *God* should have put so much *sugger* in my *Cup*; when the *Prince* of *Life*, the *Prince* of the *Kings* of the *Earth*, who was *Holy*, *Harmless*, *Undeiled*, and separate from *Sinners*, was otherwise handled? So that right thoughts, of this would make them ashamed to *Quarrel* with the most *High*; or to *repine* at his *Dispensations* with them. When they consider, how others are spared, and they so sharply exercised, their hearts are ready to say, why doth the *Lord* deal so with me? Why doth *He* single me out from others, & deal worse with me, than with them? But if they would presente before their eyes, what *Christ*, the *Son* of *His* *Love*, did meet with, they durst not suffer a quarrelling thought to lodge within their heart;

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 117

heart; but all their frettings, and repinings would be turned into wonderings and praises.

3. The Afflicted Beleever would hence draw this Conclusion. Seing Christ was put to suffer such and such evils before me, I may inferre, that the sting, venom and curse of these evils are taken away: Seing He hath passed thorow the straits of Affliction, He hath made the passage easier and wider for His followers: He hath sweatened the passage, and taken the sting away; so that now, it cannot hurt or harme so much, as otherwise it would. Christ hath gone thorow Sorrow, Shame, Paines, Wants, Temptations, Mockings, Spittings, Scourgings, Yea and Death it self; and thereby hath paved a Way for His Followers, and hath strawed it with flowres of fragrant Love; His footsteps, all alongs the way, have dropped fatness. O how sweet hath He made an hard bed now? He became poor, that we might become rich, even while poor; and so might sanctifie Poverty to us. He became a man of Sorrowes, and acquainted with grieve, that He might sweeten that lot unto His Followers, and keep them from the evil of it, from the hurt and poison

son of it. May not this Consideration encourage His Followers, to embrace the Crosse with Love; Complacency, and Delight, when it is thus sweetened to them, and in a manner no Crosse? May not a Prison become an heartsome Palace unto His People, when they consider, how the Prince of Life, the Absolute Lord of all, the Chiefe or Standard-bearer amongst Ten Thousand, was taken from Prison *Esai. 53: 8.*? How welcome should an unjust Sentence from men be, when our blessed Lord was taken also from judgment, and was wickedly condemned for a Traitour? How sweet should the most shamful and painful Death be to us, that the wicked can devise, as the expression of their imbittered malice, and rage; when Noble Jesus was crucified; and so put the most shamful and cursed Death, that could be; seing hereby Death hath lost its sting, and the curse is taken away; for he was made a curse *Gal. 3: vers. 13.*

4. The Afflicted Beleever may hence Inferre, That seing Christ hath thus been exercised himself, He knoweth how to Pity and Sympathize with such, as are so handled. Was He Mocked, Viliſied, Maligned,

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 119

Maligned, Despised, falsely Accused, Condemned for a Traitor to *Cæsar*, Buffeted, Spit upon, Scourged, and Hanged as a thief; He knoweth what it is to be so exercised, and what such a condition calleth for, and what they in such a condition have need of: He knoweth what word of consolation will be fittest for them. And this is no small encouragement unto the Beleever, as was shown above *Confid. 2.*

5. The suffering Beleever may draw this Conclusion. Seing Christ was put to all these sharp and sad sufferings, I may well lay my hand on my mouth, I may put my mouth in the dust, & be silent, let the Lord lay one me what He will: and by this meanes, he may quiet all the insurrections of his spirit against the Lord, and put a check unto all the insolent thoughts, that arise in his mind against the Lord's procedour with him, upon whatsoever occasion: as

(1.) Doth this trouble and vex his spirit, that he is innocent, as to what is laid to his charge, and is persecuted without cause? And will he not be quieted, when he remembereth, how the Innocent lamb of God was handled; how He was mis-used and persecuted, who did never man hurt, *who never did sinne, nor was guile found in His*
mouth

mouth 1 Pet. 2. vers. 22. They hated and persecuted Him without a cause Job. 15. vers. 25. as they did David, who was a typ of Him Psal. 35. vers. 19. and 69. vers. 4. See also Psal. 35. vers. 7. and 109. vers. 3. and 119. vers. 78, 161.

(2.) Doth it vex him to think, that he hath to do with unreasonable men, worse than Heathens or Turks? And will not this stop his mouth, That they can be no more rude, absurd, cruel and unreasonable, than those with whom Christ had to do? What faire law or justice could Christ get? They could not get so much as false witnesses to agree in any thing to accuse Him of; yet they would persecute Him to the death. Pilat was convinced of his Innocency, and yet did deliver Him to be crucified. What men more irrational, than the brutish, ignorant rabble, set on by judicially-blinded and enraged Ring-leaders, the Priests and Rulers?

(3.) Doth it vex them to think, that their own familiar friends and acquaintances turn their back upon them, and refuse to comfort them? And had not Christ this to wrestle against, when all fled and forsook Him, and His own Disciple betrayed Him; Is it not said, that He came unto His

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 121

His own, and that His own received Him not? *Job. 1: 11.*

(4.) Doth it trouble them to think, that they are exercised with many troubles at once, and which is worst of all, when outward troubles are lying on, the Lord is hiding His face? And I pray, was not this also Christ's lot? was not He put to cry out, even while on the cross, and within a few minutes of expiring and of giving up the ghost, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And had He not a sadder inward exercise, while in the garden, where He was made to sweat drops of blood, than any that can befall them? He had the weight of Law-wrath to bear, that was due to all the Elect ones; but the hidings, which Believers can meet with, are only fatherly with-drawings.

(5.) If the duration and continuance of the trouble and affliction come into their mindes, and vex them; let them think, that it cannot be worse with them, than it was with the Lord Christ, whose whole life was a life of suffering: we read of His weeping, but never of His laughing. How oft was He in hazard of His life, even from His Infancie? How was He maligned, slandered, called a Devil, a glutton and a wine-biber, a profane Person & How oft were

F

snares

snarcs laid for Him? and how did Trouble follow Him to His grave?

6. The afflicted Beleever may hence In-ferre, That it is his duty to study and to endeavour patience: for in this did Christ leave us an example, that we should follow His steps 1 Pet. 2. vers. 21. In this passage of Peter, we have some particulars, which were evidences, proofs or effects of Patience in Christ, in all which we should labour to follow our Example: as

(1.) As He was free of sin, before He began to suffer, & His Enemies could lay no sin to His charge; so, while He was under their hands, all the paine and trouble, they put Him to, caused Him not to sinne in thought, word, or deed: So should the Sufferer labour & strive against sin: It is true, we cannot be sinless, and our corruptions will work; yet it is our duty to wrestle against corruptions, and to set a watch upon the door of our lips, and to guard our hearts; or rather to give heart and tongue and all unto Christ to keep; that we may be helped to suffer holily, to His glory.

(2.) When He was reviled, He reviled not againe; when He suffered, He threatened not. When they were doing the worst they could do against Him, He did not in the least requite them, or wish harme

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 123

unto them; but on the contrary, as we heard *Luk. 24. 34.* He prayed the Father to forgive them. So in this should we endeavour to follow our copie, and thereby give proof of our Christian Patience; to bless when they curse us, and pray for them, when they dispitfully use us, and persecute us; and to do them good, that hate us: thus shall we evidence that we are the Children of our Father, who is in heaven *Mat. 5: 44, 45.*

(3.) *He committed Himself to Him, that judgeth righteously:* He referred Himself and His Cause unto the righteous Judg of quick and dead. So should we do, we should not fret our selves because of evil doers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity; but commit our way unto the Lord, and trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to passe *Psal, 37. vers. 1, 5.* waite for His decision, who is the righteous Judge.

Further, the right Consideration of this Patience of Christ, in all His sufferings, would help us unto a more Christian and Patient way of bearing the crosse; for we would see ground to say,

(1.) Was Christ, who did no sin, put to all this suffering; and did He bear it all with

wonderful patience ; and should I take it ill , to be thus persecuted , seing , howbeit men have no just quarrel against me ; yet God hath just cause to pursue me ? Was sinless and holy Jesus patient , and should I be impatient , who am punished of God , less than mine iniquities deserve ?

(2.) Was Christ so patient under such an heaieve cross , with which mine is not to be compared , or named in one day ; and should I be impatient , and thereby offend God more ? It were better for me , to be following my copie , and keeping mine hands clean of sin , let the crosse be what it will.

(3.) Could not all the wrongs , that Christ met with at the hands of cruel and ungrate wretches , move Him once to give them one evil word , or to wish them the least evil imaginable ; But did He rather pray for them ? And is it fit for me to be wishing them evil in my heart ? Should I not rather desire to imitate Christ , and to strive against mine own passion , and willingly forgive them all the wrongs , they do unto me ?

(4.) Did Christ commit His cause to God , and waite for His decision ? And should not I possesse my soul in patience ,
resting

Christ was a man of Sufferings. 125

resting on God by faith, that He will judge all these wrongs and injuries, in due time? Is not God the judge? And doth not vengeance belong unto Him? And should I think to dethrone Him, and take his office and work upon me? Oh! It is better, that I follow Christ, & roll all over on God, and quiet my Soul in hope of a righteous Determination from God, the righteous judge of all the world.

7. The right consideration of Christ's sufferings upon such an account, as to men, I mean, His suffering because He affirmed Himself to be a King, would make the Beleever, called to suffer upon that same account, (*to wit*, for Asserting, Maintaining, Avowing, and by their actions and practice Declaring, that Christ is King, and only King and Head over His spiritual Kingdom and Church,) rejoice in that honour, that is put upon him, to be called to witness unto such a Truth, that Christ Himself was a Martyr for, in respect of Men. O! how should this fill the hearts of such with joy, & make them sing, in the midst of the flames, and rejoice in that they are counted worthy to suffer for so noble a cause, or for the least branch thereof.

8. From Christ suffering so willingly

so cheerfully, so resolutely for the unjust, for sinners, and for rebels, the Suffering beleever will draw this Conclusion: did Christ suffer such things, and that so cheerfully, heartily and willingly for my cause; and should not I be ready to suffer cheerfully, heartily and willingly for his Cause, Word, Truth, and Interest? So that this would hearten unto an hearty and couragious witnessing for the Lord, and for His Truth, and for the Word of His Patience, and shame the man from a discouraged, faint-hearted, dead and drouping manner of following Christ, and of bearing His cross; for he would see cause to say, did Christ suffer so much for unworthy, sinful, nothing Me, and that with so much Patience, Cheerfulness, Stedfastness and fixed Resolution; and should I be ashamed of Him, who is the God of glory, the Prince of the Kings of the earth, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, or of His Cause and Interest? Should I carry, when suffering upon His account, and upon the account of His Truth, His Word, His Testimony, His work and Interest, as if I were an evil door? Should I carry, as if I repented of owning Him, and His Interest? No, no,

Sufferings are nothing to Christ's. 127
no, I should account it my glory, as it is
indeed.

CONSIDERATION. XII.

Our Sufferings are nothing comparable to Christ's.

WHen we spoke to the last Consideration, we mentioned something of this: But because more is to be said of it, and it may be edifyingly Improved, for the ends designed; we shall speak a little more to it here by it self, though it be but a branch of the former. And for this cause, we shall do these two things. 1. We shall mention some particulars, whereby the disproportion betwixt Christ's Sufferings and Ours, will appear manifest. 2. We shall shew how thoughts of these may prove advantagious unto a Christians spiritual life, in a day of Affliction and Tribulation.

In order to the understanding of the *first*, we would take notice.

1. That the disproportion is infinite, in respect of the Persons suffering: what are we, Yesterday-Nothings, base and

128 Confid. 12. Our Sufferings

worthless wormes, whose life is in our nostrils, vaine empty shadowes? But He is the standart-bearer amongst Ten Thousand *Cant. 5. vers. 10.* The wonderful Counsellour, the Mighty God; the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace *Esaï. 9. vers. 6.* This maketh that all our Sufferings are not worthie to be compared with His. We know, that the Greatness, Nobility, Worth and Dignity of the Person, who is put to suffer, maketh the Sufferings more in the account of men, than otherwise they would be. That a poor, base, unworthy beggar is scourged, spit upon and buffeted, is nothing, or not much considerable; but to see a King, a Prince, or great Noble-man so used, that is a considerable matter, in the eyes of men. It is not much to see beggars sitting on dung-hills; but it is much to see such, as did feed delicatly, sit desolat in the streets; and to see such as were brought up in scarlet, embracing dunghills; that is indeed matter of a lamentation, *Lam. 4. vers. 5.* To see base men contemned and slighted is not much; but to see Princes hanged up by their hand, and the faces of Elders not honoured, that is sad and lamentable *Lam. 5. vers. 12.* So it is
not

not much to see us, base, unworthy, sinful and nothing creatures, suffering, and put to hardships, disgrace, paine, shame, miserie and wants: But to see the Prince of the Kings of the earth in disgrace; to see the Lord of life killed, the Son of God despised, the King of Kings spit upon, and put to paine; to see the Heire of all things suffering want; that is an uncouth sight. This maketh Christ's sufferings incomparably great, and all our Sufferings nothing in comparison with these, even when ours are at the greatest. What are the sufferings of a beast, of a worme, or the like, unto the sufferings of the greatest Prince that ever was, or unto the sufferings of an Angel? And yet the worme being a creature, as well as the Prince or Angel, the difference is not so very great: but the difference is Infinitely more great, betwixt the sufferings of Christ, who is God, equal with the Father in power, and the sufferings of the greatest King or Emperour, or Angel that ever was, because there is no comparison betwixt Finite and Infinite, betwixt God and the Creature.

2. We know it is much more for one to suffer Death, while in the flowr of his age, and in the prime of his Strength, and

who in all probability, according to his natural Constitution, might live many years; than for one, who is half Dead already, and is carrying about with him the Sentence of Death, his Body being decayed, and his clay-cottage ruinous, and almost fallen to the ground: So in this respect Christs Sufferings are far beyond ours; for our Clay-bodies are so rotten with Corruption, so broken with sicknesses and diseases, that a few years should put an end to our dayes, and we should quickly return unto dust, though no hand were stretcht out against us; yea, though all imaginable meanes were used, to keep us in vigour and life. But Christs Body, though a true Body, yet was naturally free of these Corruptions, that come because of sin, which our Bodies are obnoxious unto: We never read of his sickness. And though his death was not wholly miraculous, yet we may not say, that He would have died naturally, as other men do, though no violent hands had been laid upon Him.

3. We use to think much more of his sufferings, who suffereth wrongously and without Cause, than of his, who suffereth deservedly: We will not be much moved

moved to see a bloody Murderer put to Death; but it will move us much to see a man put to death, against whom nothing worthie of Death can be alleiged. So, in this respect, our Sufferings are nothing in comparison of Christs; for however, as to men, we should suffer innocently; yet there is ground for God to plead His controverſie against us, and to use these, as Instruments of His Justice, to execute His righteous Sentence against us. But it was otherwayes as to Christ, who, though as standing in the room of the Elect, and made their Cautioner, and so made sin for them, or had their sin imputed to Him, He was smitten of Justice; yet as to His own Person, He was the Innocent Lamb of God, and without sin, Holy, Harmless, Undeſiled. And as to men, He suffered most wrongouſly, as was ſeen above.

4. The difference is great in this respect, That Mercy is Master of work, standing at the ſide of the founnace, and ordering the ſame, while His people are lying into it: But the Law-wrath and Justice of God was blowing at the coal of Christs Sufferings. We have to do but with men, whose Actions are over-

132 Confid. 12. Our Sufferings

ruled by the Omnipotent hand of a Merciful God? But He had to do with God, executing Law-Justice, because He stood in the room of the Elect. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon Him. He ~~Bear~~ the iniquity and sin of many *Esaï. 53. v. 5, 6, 11, 12.* His own self bear our sins, in his own Body, on the tree 1 *Pet. 2: v. 24.* It is not so with the Lords People; He dealeth not with them, in pure Wrath, or in Justice; but in Mercy and in Moderation. The Cup, that Christ had to drink, was full of the purest Law-wrath, and so bitter, that His Holy Sinless Soul did scunner at it: But in the Cup of his Children, there is not one drop of the revenging Justice of God, or of Law-wrath; but much of His Fatherly Mercy, and it smelleth strongly of Love; for He is bringing about their good hereby. Therefore the disproportion betwixt Christ's Sufferings and ours is Infinite, upon this account.

5. Put the case (which yet will not be) that God should deal with any of His owne, according to strict Severity, and
Law.

Law-Justice ; yet could not their Sufferings be comparable unto Christs. Though they were pursued by pure Justice, and by Law-vengeance, and sent away to everlasting flames, they should not, for all that, endure what He endured ; for they should but suffer, in that case, for their own particular and personal faults : But Christ bear the sins of many, even of all the Elect : And this would make the difference great : How much greater then must the difference now be, when their Sufferings are of a far other Nature ?

6. This will be further clear, if we Consider, how Christ did not only undergo the Debt of the Elect, and wrestled with strickest Law-Justice ; but by His Sufferings, He made full Satisfaction to Justice ; which they all, for whom Christ died, had never been able in hell to have done ; there had they lyen, forever, and had never come out of prison ; for they had never been able to have satisfied Justice : But what Christ Suffered was full Satisfaction to Justice, that it could crave no more ; the Bond and Obligation was cancelled on the Crosse, and Christ cried out, *It is finished* ; intimating that the last penny was payed. • Thus Christ suffered

134. Confid. 12. Our Sufferings

more, than all of them could have done, for all Eternity : and so certainly His sufferings were transcendently and surpassing great ; and the hardest of our Sufferings ought not to be named in one day with His.

In Order to the Improving of this, (which is the *Second Particular*) we shall mention these few things,

1. Were this Consideration rightly thought on, and improven, His people would not be so much troubled and affrighted, in a time of Sufferings, as usually they are. We see how Christ went up to *Jerusalem*, and set His face to go thitherward, resolving to go thither, notwithstanding of all Impediments in the way ; and albeit His Disciples were averse from that journey, and would have dissuaded Him from it ; He went thither with a full Resolution, though He knew He was to grapple not only with the King of Terroures there, but with pure Law-Curse and Wrath, because of the Sins of His chosen ones : And what should make His people afraid, who have little or nothing to meet with, in comparison of what Christ did meet with ; they have nothing of Law-wrath, and of pure Vindictive

dictive Iustice to meet with, as Christ had to rancountre with, in full measure: Iustice is now satisfied in their behalfe; and it is their mistake to think, that in and by Afflictions, God is pursuing them in wrath: It is true, there may be fatherly anger and displeasure in the Cup, Which they get to drink; but Christ drank-out the Curse, and satisfied Vindictive Iustice, and there is no payment to Iustice, no not one farthing required of them, in all their Sufferings. So that Beleevers have not so great cause to fear, as they suppose.

2. Were this rightly considered, the people of God would carry more like Saints under Afflictions, than they do: They are oftentimes, when sore afflicted, saying within themselves, why doth the Lord deal so with me? Are not many worse than I am more gentlie dealt with. Oh! They consider not what Holy and Harmlesse *Jesus* was made to suffer. Sure, if they considered this, they durst repine and fret in their mindes no more. What though they have been innocent, as to men; and vvhhat though they be sincere and upright, as to God? Yet they are sinners, and Christ, vvhho never sinned, vvas other-
ways

136 Confid. 12. Our Sufferings

vayes handled both at the hands of God and Man, than they are, though their Afflictions and Sufferings were many vayes multiplied.

3. Right thoughts of this would teach them to carry the yoke with very great patience and submission of Soul: Holy Jesus had another sort of voke upon His blessed neck; and yet he bore it with wonderful Patience, yea with Holy Delight. Why then should they be so impatient under their light and easie Yoke? It is little they have to bear, yea nothing, in comparison of what Christ stood under.

4. Seing Christ suffered so much, and bore the Curse, what have beleivers now to endure, or lye under? The height they can be reckoned to, is but small remnants of what fell on Christ in a full floud; and what they meet with is wholly free of Vindictive Wrath. They suffer but some little thing of that, which is behinde of the Sufferings of Christ *Col. 1: vers. 24.* Christ trode the Wine-press, He hath gone thorow the sea, and all the mighty waves thereof: The shoure of Law-vengeance fell on His face, in its full force and might; and there is nothing of that left.

left, but small drops of the outward Affliction, freed of the Curse, left behinde for His Followers. Have not His Followers then cause of Rejoicing, upon this account, in the midst of all their Afflictions?

5. Though trouble increase, yet they ought to be quiet, and possesse their Soul in Patience; for it will never increase to that height, that it will be equal to Christ's trouble: Though their Afflictions come to the heighest, that men can bring them to: Yet will they be infinitely below the Afflictions, that Christ suffered. Have any then cause to complaine, when they are so gentlie dealt vvith; and vvhen all their Afflictions are in a manner no Afflictions, in comparison of Christs?

6. We are oft ready to look upon our Sufferings thorovv a magnifying glasse, and take notice of all Considerations, that may serve to heighten them; and thus vve take a vvay to create much more trouble and vexation to ourselves, and to make our life more sad and bitter: But the right improvement of this Consideration vvould prevent all this; for vvould vve take a right viewv of the inconceivably great and unparalleled Sufferings of Christ, ours in comparison

138 Confid. 12. Our Sufferings

parison of these, would soon vanish out of sight, and disappear as nothing: And thus would we be brought to bear our Affliction with full Subjection of Soul, with silence, yea and with thankful acknowledgment of Gods Graciousness and Tenderness, who hath dealt so gently with us, when He might have made the yoke more, yea much more, heavy and insupportable.

7. Who, taking a right View of what Christ suffered, will not think themselves called to suffer for His sake, with great willingness and cheerfulness? May not every Believer say, did Christ undergo the heavy weight of the Wrath of God, for me? Did He lye under the Law-curse, and bear the blowes of Vindictive Justice, for me? Stood He betwixt me, and the pure Wrath of a sin-revenging God? Did He drink the bitter Cup, the Gall and the Worm-wood of Law-vengeance, that I might be freed therefrom? Did He bear that, under which I should have lyen to all eternity, that I might never come into that place of torment? And what Affliction, Persecution, Tribulation, Distress, Sorrow, Paine and Suffering should I think too much for Him and His sake?

Seeing

Seing He endured for me the brunt of the battel, and stood-out the sharpest of the storm and hail of Divine Wrath, and Law-Indignation; why should not I be content to bear a drop of mans Wrath, or of the storme of mans Indignation, which is free of the Curse and of pure Wrath, for Him and for His Interest? Hath He suffered so much for me, and shall I think much to suffer such a small matter for Him? Is there no proportion betwixt what He willingly endured, to save me from Hell and from the Wrath of a Sin-revenging God, and what I can be put to suffer for Him, and His Testimonie? And shall I notwithstanding be unwilling to undergo such a small inconsiderable bit of suffering for His Glory, and for the Word of His Patience? Drank he the Cup of pure Wrath for me, and shall I think much to drink a drop of cold Water for Him? O how willing and cheerful would the right apprehension of this Consideration, make the Believer, to undergo all that men could devise, for His Lord and Master?

CONSIDERATION XIII.

Suffering hath been the Lot
of Christ's Church, in
all Ages.

ORdinarily when the Church and People of God meet with new trials and troubles, they cry out, as the Church did of old *Lam. 1: v. 12. Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*: They presently conclude, that their case hath not a parallel, and that the Church in no age did meet with such a dispensation, as they are under: Hence proceedeth much sorrow. But if it were considered, that the Church in all Ages (very few excepted) hath met with the like or sorer trouble, and hath drunk of that same cup, that is now at their Head; they could not but see cause of laying their hand upon their mouth, and sitting silent in the dust, as being convinced, that there were no new thing under the Sun; Therefore, seeing this Consideration may be of use, in order to a spiritual Life under Afflictions, we shall speak a little to it; and in order

are the Lot of the Church. 141

to the right improvement thereof, lay down these following Particulars to be pondered.

1. The only Wise God hath thought good, for His own Holy ends, that His Church should be a Militant Church here, should taste of the Worm-wood & the Gall of Affliction, and wade thorow Trouble and Persecution: He hath seen it fit, that she should be in a wilderness Condition here: And so it hath been in almost all ages, as might be evidenced, if necessary.

2. Not only hath the Church of God met with Affliction; but the cup hath been long at her Head, without any intermission. The seed of *Abraham* were to be strangers, to serve and be afflicted foure hundereth yeers and more, even from *Ismaels* beginning to mock, until they were delivered out of *Aegypt* *Gen.* 15: v. 13. *Ab.* 7: 6, 7. with *Exod.* 12: 41. Was not the Church kepted fourtie yeers wandering in the Wilderness, before she came to rest? And when settled in the promised Land, how many yeers together was she oppressed by Enemies? sometimes Eight *Iudg.* 3: 8. then Eighteen *vers.* 14. then Twenty *Iudg.* 4: v. 3. Then Senventie Years in captivity in Babylon.

142 Confid. 13. Afflictions

Babylon. And we know, how the Christian Church was in an afflicted and persecuted condition, in the primitive times, three hundereth Yeers, untill *Constantine* the great came to the Empire; and how long she hath groaned under Antichrist's tyrannie.

3. The Lord also thinketh good, to renew the daies of the Church her sorrow; after some warm blainks, and some short respite; as the primitive Church had, in the intervals betwixt the Ten vehement and fiery Persecutions, some whereof were of longer, some of shorter continuance: After a respite, He sendeth a new storme; so that her calamities are like waves of the sea, ere one be well away, another cometh. Hence the *Psalmist* saith *Ps. 129. vers. 1, 2. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth.*

4. Yea moreover, the Lord seeth good to afflict her, with billowes of waves of His displeasure, and to afflict her very sore: as *Esai. 64. vers. 9, 10, 11, 12. Be not wroth very sore ——— Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burne up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid*

are the Lot of the Church. 143

laid waste: wilt thou refrain thy self for these things? O Lord, wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? This was a sore stroke, which destroyed both Church and State.

5. Some times the Church hath to do with moe Enemies, than one, at once: See Psal. 83. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. *For they have consulted together with one consent, they are conederat against thee. The Tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarens, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines with the Inhabitants of Tyre. Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot.* This was a dreadful conspiracy of all the Enemies round about, both far and neer; and their designe was, to cut off the people of God from being a Nation, that the Name of Israel might be no more in remembrance *vers. 4.* As Herod and Pilas will agree, when they are to concur to the cutting off of Christ; so these Enemies, though sometimes at variance among themselves, yet can agree in one to joine their forces together, to destroy and cut off, if they could, the Inheritance of the Lord.

6. Withall the Lord may hide His face, in the midst of these outward calamities,
and

144 Confid. 13. Afflictions

and refuse to give light, comfort, counsel or direction. She may be afflicted and tossed with tempests, and withall not comforted. *How hath the Lord* (said the Church *Lam. 2. v. 1, 3.*) *covered the Daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger? He burned against Jacob, like a flame of fire* See also *Chap. 3: 8, 9, 10, 11, &c.* and several other passages.

7. Sometime the Lord so ordereth the affliction, as that the very timeing of it, maketh it much more heavy, than otherwise it would be; as when His people are secure, and crying peace, peace. The Israelites thought all was well, when they were got out of Egypt; but ere they were awar, how quickly were they environed with new Difficulties, pursued by Pharaoh, & all his hosts; & having the red sea before, and no way to escape upon either hand, doubtless the very season & time of this new difficulty made it very grievous. It cannot be but sad, when it is with the Church, as *Ieremie* saith of the Church, in his time *Ier. 8: v. 15.* and *14: 19.* *We looked for peace, but no good came, for a time of healing, and behold trouble.*

8. Not only is the Church put to contend with open Enemies; but she is also much molested

molested with false friends, who, under pretence of friendship, seek to ruine her; These prove most dangerous Enemies, as traitours within a besieged place. While she is prospering, many offer their service to her, and seem to be cordial friends, and yet are but a mixed multitude, who, when the first occasion offers, will seek to returne to Egypt: for all their profession of kindness and friendship, when a fit opportunity offereth, there are none more bitter Enemies, than they are. So that it oft fareth with her, as *Paul* said it would fare, after his death, with the Church of *Ephesus*, in respect of Hereticks and false Teachers *Act. 20. vers. 29, 30* For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wo'ves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things &c.

9. Yea, so low may the Church sometimes be brought, under the feet of adversaries. that little hope may remaine of her recovery; yea she may be looked on by one and other, as in a desperat and forlorne condition; so that even many of the faithful may be shaken in their hops, and saying, will the Lord be favourable no more? Are His mercies clean gone? Doth His promise fail for ever more? Hath He forgotten

146 Confid. 13. Afflictions

to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Such may be her condition, that all humane probability of her recovery may be gone, and the faithful have nothing but a bare haire of hop to hold by, or a small plank of a promise, & that also under the waters of contrary dispensations, to stand upon; and so far may the delivery be out of sight, that, when it beginneth to dawne, they may be as those that dream *Pf. 126. vers. 1.*

10. Yet withall it is considerable, that notwithstanding of all the opposition, made by the Devil and his Instruments, against the Church, she hath been a burning bush, and yet not consumed: though she hath been many a time afflicted, and that from her youth, yet her adversaries have not prevailed against her: the plowers have often plowed upon her back, and made long their furrowes; yet still the righteous Lord hath cut the cordes of the wicked *Psa. 129. vers. 1, 2, 3, 4.* Many an arrow have they shot at her; yet mount Zion stands, and she hath her Towers, Bulwarcks and Palaces *Psal. 48.* She is founded upon the rock of ages, and the ports of hell cannot prevail against her *Mat. 16.* No Weapon, that is formed against Israel, shall prosper *Eesai. 54: 17.*

If

If these particulars were rightly thought upon and improven, we might be helped thereby to a life of Faith and Hope, both in reference to the sad condition of the Church in general, and also in reference to our own particular suffering condition.

And first, In reference to the Church, we may from these particulars see ground of giving a check to our Inferences from the Lords's present Dispensations with His Church, favouring of Unbeleef, Despondency, Discouragment and Hopelessness. We see, it is true, the Church overwhelmed with sorrow, sitting as a widow, and her teares upon her face: We see her looking pale, as if death were in her face, all beauty and liveliness gone, her Enemies multiplying and prospering daily, and the Church still sincking more and more in the sea of sorrow and distress. Many, it is true, are ready to say, can this be the true Church, and these the real people of God, whose life is thus constantly made bitter with renewed stormes and tempests of adversity? Can this indeed be the work of God, which is thus cast down to the ground, and trampled under-foot? Would the Lord stand by and look on, when His spouse (if she were so indeed) is thus abused by the vilest

vilest of men? Would He suffer His Name and Work to be thus blasphemed? True, all this and much more may be said, and be done against His Church, and she remaine the true Church of Christ; and His work be His work. It hath been so before now; and there is no new thing under the Sun. And the right thoughts of what is said would prevent the trouble, that such Atheistical and perplexing thoughts necessarily cause, if they be admitted and fomented. Hath not the Church of Christ been a militant Church from the beginning? hath there not been a constant enmity betwixt the seed of the Serpent, and the seed of the woman? Is it any new thing to see the Church driven to the wilderness, and tossed in the sea of afflictions? Is it any unheard-of thing, that the Church must be tossed betwixt winde and wave, and have stormes and tides and all against her? Is it any new thing to see the Church, even while within the sight of the haven of an happy and glorious Reformation, driven back to sea againe? What? hath she not oftentimes seemed to on-lookers to be sunck? have not false friends many a time sought to drive her upon rocks, or cut her cables, that she might be left to the mercy of the seas; or to make lecks, that she might sinck to the ground

ground? Is outward prosperity the mark of the true Church? No: let Antichrist make it a mark of his, seeing so the Papists will. The Church of Christ must be the speckled bird; She must have many horns in her side: Her rest and triumphant state is above; though, it is true, she may have some breathing times, some lucide intervals, and a more glorious day, when the Vial is poured forth on the Seat of the Beast, *Euphrates* dried up, and the Kings of the East brought in, and when *Babylon* the great is fallen, *Gog* and *Magog* destroyed, and the Beast and the false Prophet cast into the lake of brimstone; but then the end of her warfare will be nigh.

Again we call to mind, how often the Church hath been very low, and her Enemies singing a triumph, as if they had gotten an everlasting victory, and as if they were assured, that the Name of Israel should be no more mentioned; and yet the Lord hath hithertill saved, and hath brought that broken Vessel saife to land. Notwithstanding of all that the red Dragon the Hethenish Emperours did in persecuting, with their bloody massacres, the Christian Church, the first three hundred Years; yet the Church of Christ, grew and multiplied and spread over all the Empire. And

150 Consider. 13. Afflictions

though the Antichristian abomination did prevail in the Church, and the woman was made to flee to the wilderness 42 months, or 1260 dayes, or Years, from the Year 660 or 666 (as some compute) untill the Reformation 1550. or 1560. Yet notwithstanding of this long desolation and darkness, during which time the Gentiles possessed the outter court, the Lord in his own good time, in the dayes of *Lutber* and afterward, made light break up, and made the world see, that His Church was not yet destroyed. And though now Antichrist be thinking to possesse the outter Court againe, and to destroy the Reformation & to make even the lands, that were by solemne Covenant devoted unto Christ, as His peculiar Inheritance, become lands of graven images, and brought under his tyrannie: yet the Lord liveth, & we are to waite in faith & hop and to possess our souls in patience; for now is the faith & patience of the Saints; & to beleeve, that in due time; He, who hath begun to poure forth the vials of His wrath upon that Antichristian cursed conspiracy, will also make an end: & in His own good time shall poure forth the Vial on the Beast *Revel. 16. vers. 10.* And the judgment of the great whore shall come, that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the Kings of the

the earth have committed fornication, even the woman, that sitteth upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of Names of Blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns, arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden Cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, upon whose fore-head is a Name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And which is drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyres of Jesus. Which is manifestly interpreted by the Spirit of God (Revel. 17. vers. 8. to the end,) to be the Papal Church and State, sitting at Rome and commanding all. Wherefore it becometh all, who love their lives, to take notice of that word Revel. 18. vers. 4, 5.

— Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, &c. for the day is coming, when it shall be said (as it is vers. 6, 7, 8, &c.) Reward her, even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup, which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified her self and lived delicioust; so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit

a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire; for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her. Let us live in hope, that the day shall come, when what followeth there shall be fulfilled, and it shall be said, as vers 20. Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye Holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And it shall be found true, that is said vers. 21. And a mighty Angel took up a stone, like a great milstone, and cast it into the Sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great City Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And that shall be verified, which is foretold Chap. 19. A great voice shall be heard of much people, saying Allelujah, Salvation and Glory, and Honour and Power unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the Earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the Blood of His Servants at her hand, vers. 1, 2.

Next, This Consideration may be improved by particular Beleevers, in reference to their particular Exercises and Afflictions: For hence they might inferre,

1. That they have no cause to complean, but reason rather to lay their hand upon their mouth, what ever way the Lord be pleased

to exercise them, and what ever Affliction He lay upon their loines; for this hath been the ordinary Lot of the Church; and seing the Lord thinketh good to exercise her with sore and sharpetrials, in all Ages: Why may He not also exercise them, in Particular?

2. That they have yet less cause to compleane or be dissatisfied, seing the Church, their Common Mother, hath met with sadder and sorer Crosses and Distresses, than they have met with, or can meet with: It is a sadder sight to see the Mother put to the door, and sitting in a Wilderness, weeping and refusing to be comforted; than to see a Child whipped.

3. That they have reason to rejoyce, in their sad Lot, upon this account, that they are not in that solitary and lamentable Condition alone; their Mother is suffering with them. Are they in a Wilderness, so is she: are they sitting in the dust, so is their Mother sitting with them.

4. That by this they see, they are no Bastards, but Children of the House, suffering with the Mother, and no other wayes dealt with, than the Mother is.

5. That Crosses and a Course of Affliction are no evidence of the Lords not owning

154 Confid. 14. Others have

lag or looking upon them as His Children; as corruption and unbeleeve would prompt them to inferre and conclude: Afflictions can no more say, that they are not the Children of God; than Afflictions on the Church can say, that she is not the Church of Christ, nor His Spouse.

6. That they may comfort themselves, in their Troubles, with the Mother her Consolations; and as it were lye in her lap or bosome, and partake of her cordials, and feed with her upon the same promises, until the night be over, and the day dawn, and the time of the singing of the birds come, and the voice of the turtle be heard in the land, and until the Beleevers God and the Church her Husband wipe all teares away from the face both of Mother and Child.

CONSIDERATION. XIV.

Other precious Beleevers
have been Afflicted so, if
not worse.

THough such, as are ease in Zion, think little of all the Trouble and Anguish, that

that the Afflicted are put unto; and not a few prove like *Jobs* Friends *Job. 6: v. 13. &c.* though to him, that is afflicted Pity should be shewne *vers. 14.* Yet such, as are under the Affliction, can subscribe to the truth of that, which the Wise Man hath *Prov. 15: 15. All the dayes of the afflicted are evil:* for, so long as the Affliction endureth, they are ready to think, that their Condition groweth worse and worse daily. Nay, ordinarily Affliction so seazeth upon them, that they cannot perceive the Grounds of Comfort, though hard at hand, and can make little use of Cordials, though within their reach. A time of Affliction is such a thoughtful time, that they are as a Ship at Sea, tossed with Tempests and contrary Tides. Among other disturbing thoughts, this is one, *How is this* (think they with themselves) *that the Lord hath pitched upon me, and singled me out, from all the rest, or the most part of His Children, at least, whom I know, and set me up for His mark, at which He is shooting His Arrowes?* My case is not like the ordinary case of others; there is something extraordinary in my case: I know, that His Followers have been in Affliction, but their Affliction was nothing comparable to mine: Were all things laid together, my Affliction would be found to be of another kind:

156 Confid. 13. Others have

Were my Affliction but such as others have had, I should be able to bear it; but there being something Odde and Uncouth in mine, I cannot choose but be troubled.

Though He only, who comforteth those, that are cast down, can comfort such; 2 Cor. 6: vers. 7. Yet he can do it by unlikely meanes, and blesse a few words to this end. We shall therefore only propose a few things, that may serve to make a Diversion, as to these perplexing and disturbing thoughts; and reduce them to these few Heads.

First, We shall propose a few Generals, which such afflicted persons would take notice of.

Secondly. Shew how, possibly, their case is not so singular, as they conceive it to be.

Thirdly, We shall show, how little cause they would, possibly, be found to have, to speak thus, if all things were well considered.

Fourthly, We shall show, how that, seeing they will take notice of others, and compare their case with theirs, they may and should improve the example of others, better than thus.

As to the *First*, let these Particulars be considered.

I. It is

1. It is ordinary almost with every one to be accounting their own case and condition, in Affliction, singular; and to say, as much as those of whom we are now speaking. Every one feeleth that best, which is neereſt to himself: they are more sensible of their own paine, than of the pain of others; and paine felt is more touching, than what is understood by the report of others only. Hence every one is ready to conclude, that their own case is worst. And therefore this should be looked upon, as no strange thing.

2. Every bodies Temper and Disposition not being alike, some may be obnoxious to distempers and diseases, that others are not much acquainted with; and some by their Folly and Intemperancy may bring peculiar diseases upon themselves; and when such must have peculiar Physick, adapted to their diseases, should they compleane of the Physician; that he giveth them not such gentle and easie Medicines, as he doth to others? So the compleaner here may have brought upon himself some uncouth spiritual distemper, which calleth for some Afflictions, more than ordinary, to cure the same: Should they then be anxious to finde out a precedent, or one that hath been so handled, as they are? Ought they not rather,

ther, to reasone thus with themselves. doth the Lord purge and afflict me more than ordinary, then it is like my peccant humors, & my corruptions, have been more than ordinary.

3. Be it so, that thy case is in some respects singular, what knoweth thou, if there shall be two found, in all particulars, or in all considerable circumstances, every way alike? May not the Lord hereby declare and preach forth his Infinite Wisdom, in guiding so many Sones and Daughters to glory, through so many several Kinds of Trials, Exercises, Afflictions and Temptations? Will it not be much to His Glory, when every one of the Redeemed shall, beside their wondering at the gracious Work of Redemption, common to them all, have each something peculiar to himself, raising his Admiration? As it commends the wonderful Workmanship of God, that among so many millions of faces of Men, two shall hardly be found, betwixt which no difference shall be discovered; so, may not this commend the Work of Gods Providence?

4. And what if, as to those Particulars, wherein they think their owne case singular, it be otherwayes indeed? Have they had through acquaintance with all the Saints of
God.

God, in all ages? Why then do they speak so confidently?

5. But be it so, as they say; yet they should know, that they are in the hands of a well skilled Physician, and of a tender Father, who knoweth their Constitution, their Distemper, and their Strength; and will make the Physick no stronger, than He knoweth they can bear, and will work, and do them good. And this should cause them forget their complaints.

6. All that people say, while under a distemper, must not be taken for certaine. *Job* had many expressions, while under the Affliction, that he would not owne or approve of, afterward.

As to the *Second Head*, that we may come neerer their case, what if it be found, that even as to these same Particulars, upon the account of which they account their case singular, others, of whom we read in Scripture, have been in the like case before? We shall therefore mention some Particulars, which people in Affliction use to aggravat their case from, and because of, look upon their case as singular,

1. Some may think their case singular upon this account, That they never knew much in experience what prosperity meant; their

their Life hath been nothing but a Life of Exercises, Temptations and Trouble. Such would know, that some therefore would possibly think, they might bear Afflictions the better, being so accustomed therewith, and inured thereunto, and trained up at that School. But however, they erre, if they think, that this case is singular, or that none but they have been so exercised; nor to mention our Lord Jesus, whose Life was a Life of bitterness, as we saw above; see one Instance of *Heman Psalm. 88: vers. 15. I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up.* His Trouble and Affliction was not of Yesterday; He was under it from his youth:

2. Others, it may be, will complaine, and think their Affliction so much the sadder, that they have not been much enured with, nor trained up at the School of Affliction, & that if they had been used with Trouble, they would have thought this, that now lyeth upon them, the more light and easy to be born; but now, having been so long in prosperity, and at ease, the Affliction coming is more terrible, and seemeth more insupportable. Oh what is man, that will thus abuse and pervert all things; and can be satisfied with almost nothing! Others would look upon this Dispensation as gentle and

been so; or worse afflicted. 161

and easie, and as a great favour, and yet what some would account a mitigating ingredient, others will look upon, as a great aggravation. Some would say, that such were not much to be pitied, who have had such a long Summer-day of prosperity: who would think much, if a Shipe, that hath for many dayes had a faire winde, should towards the end of her Voyage, meet with a contrary blast; But the truth is, so rebellious are our hearts, that none of Gods Dispen-sations with us, can satisfie us; and every Body is better pleased with anothers Lot, than with his owne; and therefore we are so ready to choose any condition, but what God is pleased to carve out unto us; and we think every bodys Affliction is more easie, than our owne; and we could bear any Lot better, than what we are called to bear. May it not be thought, that such as compleane upon this account, would complaine much more, if it were with them, as it was with *Asaph* *Psal. 73: v. 14.* *All the day long have I been plagued and chafed ever morning.* However such as cry-out, because after a long time of prosperity, they meet with adversity, would know that their case, in this, is not singular; as *Jobs* instance can evince, who was not much acquainted with adversity and affliction, till Satan began

gan to pursue him ; but dwelt at ease , and in prosperity *Job. 16: 12. I was at ease, but He hath broken me asunder.*

3. Some possibly will look upon their case as sad and singular, because the Crosse, under which they stand , seemeth so heavy , that they see not how they shall be able to stand under it. As if, forsooth, every one almost werẽ not ready to say the same; How few are there , who look upon their own Affliction , as the lightest and easiest ? *David* told us , *Psal. 6: vers. 3* that *his Soul was sore vexed* and *Psal. 55: vers. 4* that *his heart was sore pained within him.* Was not the *Israelites* case in *Egypt* hard, when their *lives were made bitter with hard bondage Exod 1: 14.* and they were made to sigh by reason of the bondage *Exod. 2: 21*? Was it not sad with *Paul* and his *Companions* , when he saith , they were pressed out of measure , and above strength, in so much , that they despaired even of life *2 Cor. 1: v. 8.* We hear of some , who have come out of great Tribulation , *Revelation 7: v. 14.*

4. Some possible will account their condition singular, in that it is not with one or two rodes, that they are chastened, but with many , and with several sorts , their Affliction is complicated , and many are twisted together ; whence they are ready to say ,
That

That none was ever so visited and afflicted, as they are. But the case of Job is enough to confute this mistake. Hath God taken away thy goods, and made thee of a rich man, a poorman? So did He to Job, whose riches were great; for he had Seven Thousand Sheep, Three Thousand Camels, Five Hundred Yoke of Oxen, Five Hundred She Asses Job. 1: vers. 3. Hath God taken away thy pleasant Children, in whom thou tookest delight? So did He take away Job's Seven Sons and Three Daughters, and that in one houre, and that by an unusual manner, he neither seeing them die, nor getting one word of them, before they died. Read his booke, and see what a multitude of evils came upon him at once. See a short summe Chap. 19: vers. 8, ——— 21. *He hath fenced up my way, that I cannot passe, and He hath set darkness in my Paths, He hath stript me of my glory, and taken the Crown from my Head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, and mine hope hath He removed, like a tree. He hath also kindled His wrath against me, and He counteth me unto Him, as one of His Enemies. His Troups come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my Tabernacle. He hath put my Brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My Kinsfolk have failed,*
and

164 Confid. 14. Others have

and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They
 that dwell in mine house, and mine maidens
 account me for a stranger; I am an alien in their
 sight. I called my servant and he gave me no
 answer, I intreated him with my mouth. My
 breath is strange to my wife: though I intreated
 for the Childrens sake of mine own body. Yea
 young Children despised me: I arose, and they spoke
 against me. All my inward friends abhorred
 me, and they whom I loved are turned against
 me. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my
 flesh; and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.
 Paul 2 Cor. 6: 4, 5, 8, 9, 10. giveth us a cata-
 logue of calamities of various kindes, that
 he and others did meet with: such as, Af-
 flictions, Necessities, Distresses, Stripes, Imprison-
 ments, Tumults, Labours, Watchings, Fastings,
 Dishonour, Evil reports, accounted Deceivers,
 Unknown, Dying, Chastned, Sorrowful, Poor
 and having nothing. And againe he giveth
 us an account of what befell himself,
 2 Cor. 11. vers. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. —

In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent,
 in deaths oft; of the jewes five times received I
 forty stripes save one; Thrice was I beaten with
 rods, once was I stoned; Thrice I suffered ship-
 wrack, a night and a day have I been in the
 deep; in journeying often, in perils of waters,
 in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own coun-
 trey-men, in perils by the Heathen, in perils

been so, or worse afflicted. 165

in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false Brethren, in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness &c. Who can say, that his condition runneth parallel with this? And if not, have they any cause to complaine, and cry out, never man was so hardly dealt with, as they are? See also what hardships those did undergo, of whom we read *Hebr. II. vers. 36; 37, 38.* They had trial of cruel mockings and scourginges, yea moreover of bonds and Imprisonments, they were sawne asunder, were tempted, were slaine with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, &c. Can they say, that they are more hardly dealt with, than these were? If not, is not their complaint very groundless?

5. Some possibly will account their case singular, in that afflictions attend them, as the shadow doth the body; where ever they be, and whithersoever they go, Crosses, Troubles and Temptations are their constant Companions. But do they verily think, that none before them, hath had as good cause to speak thus, as they? Sure, the Catalogue of calamities, that *Paul* reckoneth up, as we heard lately, saith, he had such a lot, before them, He met with
troubles

166 **Confid. 14. Others have**

trouble both by sea and land, in cities, in wildernesses, by his own countrey-men, by strangers, and by false Brethren; in some places was he scourged, in some places beaten with rods, in some places stoned, in some places imprisoned &c. so that a short view of his life will put this beyond question. And himself said *Act. 20. 23.* that *in every citie bonds and afflictions did abide him.*

6. Some may possibly think, that their sufferings are so much the sadder, that they reach not their goods, but their good name, and credite, and that without all colour of ground. Yet, for as heavy as this appeareth to be; it is no new or uncouth thing. It is true, it may prove sad to some, who are tender of their name and credite, and would glory thereof; but how sad so ever it be to them, they must not say, that their case, as to this, is singular. *Woe to you* (said Christ to his Disciples and followers *Luk. 6. vers 26.*) *When all men speak well of you; for so did their Fathers unto the false Prophets.* And againe, *Mat. 5. vers. 11, 22.* *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, ——— And shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glade; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets,*

been so, or worse afflicted. 167

phets, which were before you. So that this was the common lot of the Prophets, & was to be the lot of the Apostles, & accordingly Paul tells us, 1 Cor. 4. vers. 9, 11, 12, 13.

———— That they were made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men; and he addeth, Even unto this present houre, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and are buffeted, and have no certaine dwelling place, and labour working without our own hands; being reviled, we blesse; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, to this day. Was not here a suffering of an high degree, both in body and in name? So 2 Cor. 6. vers. 8. As deceivers, and yet true. So were they accounted, the chiefe of Traitors, such as turned the world upside down Act. 17. vers. 6. He was accounted, the man, that taught all men every where against the People, and the Law, and the Temple Act. 21. vers. 28. Elijah was called the Troubler of Israel 1 King 18. vers. 17. We heard above, how Christ himself suffered in His Name. So that this must be no rare or uncouth thing.

7. It may be an heavy affliction to some, possibly; to be persecuted by their own Countrey-men, Neighbours, and Relations. But was not Christ so? was not Paul

Paul so exercised 2 Cor. 11. vers. 26. Were not the *Thessalonians* so afflicted 1 *Thes.* 2: vers. 14? Knew not *David* this in experience *Psal* 55. vers. 12, 13. And *Job* also, when not only his Friends and domestick Servants & neighbours carried so unfriendly and untenderly with him; but even his own wife, that lay in his bosome, had no other consolatory counsel to give him, but to take his leave or last good night (as we say) of God, and so be destroyed out of hand; for thus the sentence may be interpreted, which in the Original is, *blesse God and die*; as we use to blesse, or wish well to them, of whom we are taking our leave; and so this *benedicere*, is, as it were, *valedicere*: Her saying *blesse* was as much, as if she had said, *Bid Him fare well.*

8. Some may think their crosse heavy upon this consideration, that they have to do with men, who know no Justice, and walk not either by Law, or Equity; but do what they please. But neither is this any strange thing; for not to speak of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who was thus dealt with; what Law or Justice did *John Baptist* meet with, when upon the desire of a light dancing Damsel his head was cut off in prison, without so much as a forme of process? What Law or equity acted the confused
rabble

rabble, that rose up against *Paul*, at *Ephesus* *Act. 19*? By what Law was he and *Silas* beaten openly and uncondemned at *Philippi* *Act. 16. vers. 22, 23, 37*? By what colour of law, was he drawn out of the Temple, and almost killed by the Jewes *Act. 21*?

9. If it adde to the griefe of any, when they consider, that such as persecute and oppose them, are not openly profane, and wicked Persons; but such as are accounted good and sober persons; and such as may be judged to have the grace of God in them: It would be remembered, that howbeit this indeed be a sad Ingredient in the cup of affliction, & may make the trouble heavier, than otherwise it would be; yet it is no uncouth thing: *Job's* friends were good, sober, understanding Persons, though in a great mistake as to the application of their discourse unto *Job's* state. *Paul* did meet with some thing like this *Act. 13. vers. 30.* at *Antioch*, when the Jewes stirred up devout and honourable women against him. The false Teachers, that on all occasions opposed *Paul*, were not profane-wicked Persons; for they had transformed themselves into the Apostles of Christ *2 Cor. 11: vers. 13.* We read also of some, that preached Christ of envy and contention, supposing thereby to adde affliction

170 Confid. 14. Others have

unto Paul's bonds. *Phil. 1. vers. 15, 16.*

10. Some may possibly think much to be put to open shame, and made a gazing stock, and to be exposed to open contempt, and ludibrie; and indeed, that may be a sad affliction to some noble and generous spirit, and heavier than death it self. But yet it is no strange thing; for we read of some *Hebr. 10. vers. 33.* who were theatrized, brought to open scaffolds, and put on pillories, and made publick spectacles, and exposed to open mockery. So *Hebr. 11. vers. 36.* some had *trial of cruel mockings*: Was not *Iob* made a by-word of the people, and their song *Iob 17:6.* and *30. vers. 9.*

Several other things of this nature might be named, but I shall haste unto the *third* particular, and shew, how little ground there would be for such complaints and outcries, if all were known and rightly considered: and to this end I shall mention these particulars.

1. When *Peter* is writting to a scattered company, living as strangers, in a strange land, he saith unto them *1 Pet. 4. vers. 12.* Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing hapned unto you. Though they
were

were scattered thorow many Countreyes, and were to meet with trials, yea and fierie trials; yet he would not have them troubled thereat, or look upon it, as any uncouth accident, befalling them: teaching us thereby to look otherwayes upon the sharpest of trials and exercises, that we meet with, than we readily do; and not to think, that we are worse dealt with, than others, or that God taketh some uncouth un-heard-of course with us.

2. What if it be found, after impartial trial, that there have been many, who have drunk deeper, by many degrees, of the cup, than they have done; and that their affliction, under which they groan and cry-out so much, is nothing comparable to what others of the Lord's worthies have been exercised with? Will not this appear by an impartial view of the Instances adduced? And seing their crosse is light, in comparison of what some dear to the Lord have had, is there or can there be any ground for their so complaining?

3. Will it not be found, that such as complaine thus, dar not compare themselves with others, who have been as sore afflicted, if not sorer, than they, as to Grace, Sanctification, Communion with

172 Confid. 14. Others have

God &c? Will they arrogat to themselves that honourable Epithet, which the Lord gave *David*, a *Man according to God's own heart*; or *Job*, a *perfect man and upright, and one that feared God, and eshewed evil*? And if not, is there ground for their complaint, when God is dealing no worse with them, than He did with those, yea is dealing with them in a far more gentle manner?

4. What if it be found, that such as have been visited with the same affliction, with which they are visited, and under which they groan so much, have not provoked the Lord, so much as they have done? And will not their complainings then be found most unreasonable and groundless?

5. What if it be found also true & undeniable, that those who have met with the same calamities, have been more usefull in their generation, than they are, or ever were? If God spare not the green tree, shall the drye tree, that is sapless and barren, doing little more than cumbering the ground, complaine, that it is cut down? We should be content with the same lot, that both the Prophets and Apostles had. It needed not grieve the
Philip.

been so, or worse afflicted. 173

Philippians, that they had the same conflict, which they saw in *Paul*, and heard to be in him. *Phil. i. last.*

The *last* particular, is to shew a better way of improving the example of others, who have been afflicted before us, than to take occasion therefrom to complaine of God's dealing, as if it were worse with us, than with them: *to wit*, to be considering their Christian carriage under their afflictions, that we may be ashamed of our deportment, and may be stirred up to follow their example, in what is truly commendable, and is for that end held forth to us in Scripture: many particulars of this kind might be mentioned, we shall name only a few.

I. We finde them patient under the crosse, and their instance proposed to us for imitation, in this respect: So saith the Apostle *James Cap. 5. vers. 10, 11. Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we account them happy which endure; yee have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.* If the carriage of the Prophets under the crosse, and particu-

174. Confid. 14. Others have

larly of *Job*, were narrowly searched, it would be found, that there was sometime too much Impatience, but the Spirit of the Lord would not have us poreing upon that, but to take special notice of their patience; and in this, to look upon them, as a copie, set before us; for albeit there was much Impatience to be observed in *Job's* carriage; yet his Patience is taken notice of by the Spirit of God, and we are bidden look to that, as if we had never heard of one of his impatient expressions.

2. We finde them looking especially to God's hand in the matter, and overlooking all Instruments, adoring and reverencing the holy Providence and Disposal of God, laying their hand upon their mouth, and giving God the glory: and in this we should study to be followers of them. *David* said *Psal. 39. vers. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it:* And when *Shimei* railed upon him, and cursed, he said, *let him curse, for the Lord hath said unto him, curse David,* and *Job* said, the Lord hath given and taken, blessed be His name.

3. We finde them following their duty, notwithstanding of all the trouble and calamity,

lamity which they did meet with; *Paul*, notwithstanding of all that befel him, went on, and minded his work; when he was persecuted in one place, he went to another, and there preached the Gospel: And in this we should follow them; for, for this end, are these things left on record.

4. We finde them so far from fretting and repineing at the Lord's Dispensations with them, in suffering wicked instruments to afflict them and persecute them, for righteousness; that they therein rejoyce, as the Apostles did *Act. 5. vers. 41.* And *Paul* glorified in these his infirmities *2 Cor. 12.* And it is commendable to follow them here:

5. We finde them likewise, notwithstanding of all their Sufferings, standing fast in the faith, adhering to their principles, refusing deliverance upon any sinful or base termes. *Heb. 11. vers. 35.* Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: And it were good, if we were considering them to this end, that in this we might follow their footsteps.

6. We finde them acting faith on God, in the mean time, *Heman Psal. 88.* was in

176 Confid. 14. Others have &c.

a very sad case, yet for all that was come upon him, he would not quite his interest in God; but beginneth that sad *Psalm* thus, *O Lord God of my salvation*. So did *Job* likewise act faith on God, *Chap. 19.*

7. We finde them exercising Hop, for as desperat-like as their case would seem to be; as *David Psalm. 38.* the beginning whereof sheweth that his case was then very sad; yet *V. 15.* he crieth out, *In the Lord do I hope.*

8. We finde them taking with their iniquity, whereby they provoked God, to deal so with them, or desirous to understand what is the ground of God's controverſie: so the Church *Mica. 7. vers. 9.* *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* See likewise *Lam. 3. vers. 39, 42.* And *Job* said, *Chap. 10. ver. 2.* *I will say unto God, do not condemne me; shew me, wherefore thou contendest with me.*

If we were thus taking notice of the commendable deportment of other worthies, when they were in Afflictions, to the provoking of our selves unto the like carriage, we would finde it a more profitable exercise, than to be, in our minds, aggravating our lot, beyond the
lot

Right Suffering is God's gift. 175

lot of those before us, and imagining that God dealeth worse with us, than He hath done with others, before us.

CONSIDERATION. XV.

Suffering Christianly is a special gift of God.

MAny look upon Suffering for the Name of Christ, with an evil eye, and with prejudice; and because of the misapprehensions they have of it, they cannot comply with it; whereas a right view of it would make it less terrible, yea more lovely and desireable. The Apostle, writting to the *Philippians Chap. I. vers. 29.* giveth them ground to think well of the cross of Christ, when he said, *for unto you it is given, in the behalfe of Christ, not only to beleve on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.* He had been exhorting them, in the foregoing Verses, that they would stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing be terrified by their adversaries: and after he had told them;

He is

that

that the opposition of the adversaries was an evident token to them of Perdition, & that their own standing & withstanding was an evident token to themselves of Salvation, and that of God; He subjoineth this ground of encouragment; that it was granted unto them, as a special favour, and that in the behalfe of Christ, not only to beleeve on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. In which words, these *Three* Particulars are chiefly considerable, in order to our present designe.

1. That suffering, for the sake of Christ, is a special gift of God, and not a thing that meer natural Strength and Courage can reach.

2. That it is a gift purchased by Christ, and given on His behalfe, or for His sake; and not for any thing in us.

3. That it is a gift, in some respect, beyond that excellent gift of faith.

But before I speak particularly to these points, I shall premit these *three* things considerable.

1. Though to bear any crosse, or crossing dispensation, outward or inward; in a christian acceptable manner, be beyond the power of nature, and natures strength,
and

Right Suffering is God's gift. 179

and is the pure gift of God : yet here we are mainly to speak of that Trouble, Afflictions and Crosses ; which the followers of Christ are put to suffer by wicked Men, and for avowing of His truth and Interest, of what measure or degree so ever it be ; for, this is that which is here understood, and whereof the Apostle is speaking, as the forgoing and following Verses cleare.

2. Nor do we hereby understand every Trouble, that wicked persons create unto the Godly (though unto a Christian deportment, in such a case, the special grace and gift of God be required :) but of that ; which is properly for the Name of Christ, for adhereing to His truth and cause : for of this doth the Apostle speak, when he mentioneth *suffering for Christs sake.*

3. Nor do we speak of Suffering here, simply considered ; but of suffering, accompanied with its Christian Concomitants, or of Suffering in a Christian, humble ; self denied ; handsome and cleanly manner ; this being the Suffering, which is to be called the gift of God ; and not that, which may be undergone, upon a carnal account, and may flow from a

carnal Principle , and be intended for some carnal end.

Having premised these things , we come to speak to the *first* point , and shew , That suffering in a Christian manner , for the Name of Christ , is the meer gift of God , and beyond the reach of all natural Strength and Courage : Which will be sufficiently clear , if we but take a view of such particulars , as are requisite unto a Christian way of suffering for Christs sake , some only of which we shall content ourselves here to name : as

I. To the end , that one suffer as a Christian , for the sake of Christ , it is requisite , that he be a Christian indeed , a *believer in Christ* indeed ; for a man in nature can act nothing , as a Christian , as wanting the divine principle of all Christian Actions : This is imported in the Text , now before us , where the gift of faith in Christ is supposed as existent , before the gift of suffering. Now it is beyond all debate with the orthodox , that to believe in Christ , and to become a Christian indeed , is beyond the reach of nature ; and the same Text here evinceth faith to be given of God ; so also is it expressly said to be the gift of God , and not of ourselves.

Ephes.

Right Suffering is God's gift. 181

Ephes. 2: 8. And therefore, this Christian suffering for the sake of Christ, must be the special gift of God.

2. Unto suffering Christianly it is requisite, not only that the sufferer be a Believer; but also, that *faith be acting* on God, through Christ, and resting upon the promises of outgate, and of an everlasting recompence, and of throw-bearing, and the other objects of faith, necessary to be eyed, in such a day; for if this be not, even the believer may fainte and fall backward, as we see in *Peter*: Now this present acting of faith being the gift of God, through His grace and influences, it is manifest, that Christian suffering, unto which this is requisite, must be also His gift.

3. *Hope* is also requisite unto a Christian suffering; for hereby must the sufferers head be born-up, when he is swimeing thorow the sea of Persecution; it is the Souls anchor, which must not be wanting in a storme; it is his helmet, and must not be a missing in the day of battel. Now this hope being the special gift of God, and his work *1 Pet. 1: 3. 2 Thes. 2: vers. 13.* it is manifest, that Christian suffering, unto which this hope is so necessary, must be His special gift.

4. *Patience* is likewise hereunto requisite, for without it, there will be nothing but wearying, fainting, fretting, repining, and sinful longing to be from under the Crosse; hence there is so great need of patience, *Heb. 10. vers. 36. Luk. 21. vers. 19. Jam. 1. vers. 4. 2 Pet. 1. vers. 6.* And it is so much pressed *Jam. 5. v. 10, 11. 1 Tim. 6: 11.* And commended *1 Thes. 1. vers. 3. 2 Thes. 1. vers. 4. Revel. 2: 2, 9.* Now this patience is not the work of nature, but His work, who is the God of all patience *Rom. 15. vers. 5.* And therefore Christian suffering must be His work and gift also.

5. *Humble submission and calmness of spirit* is also requisite unto a right way of suffering; for a proud, haughty, unquiet and undaunted spirit, will never take a right lift of the crosse: and this must also be wrought by the free and powerful grace of God, and must be of Him, from whom every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down; even of the Father of lights *Jam. 1: 17.* And therefore, Christian suffering, unto which this is so requisite, must be of Him also.

6. Such, as will suffer Christianly for Christ, must have *Courage, Boldness, and Christian*.

Right Suffering is God's gift. 183

Christian Resolution; as accounting it their glory and honour to suffer for His sake, and as remembering, that as, on the one hand, their cheerful, courageous and valiant suffering for the Interest of Jesus, is no small encouragement to others to adhere to Him, and to His cause; so, upon the other hand, to suffer discouragedly, and with a fainting heart, is no small disadvantage to the cause, Enemies being thereby more hardened, and friends discouraged. And this Courage and fixed Resolution must only be had from God, Nature will not furnish this. They must *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might Ephes. 6. vers. 10.* And as this is from the Lord alone, so must the grace of Suffering Christianly be.

7. He, who would suffer as a Christian, must have his Conscience sprinkled, God must be pacified, all quarrels must be taken out of the way; for the sense and apprehension of an angry God, and sin and guilt looking the man in the face, will much dash, discourage and faine him, in his sufferings, Now it is unquestionable, that God's manifesting himself satisfied and well pleased with the man, is His own free gift; it is His proper work

to sprinkle consciences from dead works ; and so must this Christian suffering be from Him , which dependeth here-upon.

8. When one is questioned for the Cause of-Christ , before learned and able Statemen and Politicians , or before learned Church-men , he will have need of something , wherewith to answer his Accusers ; and so be in case to give a glorious Testimony to the Truth , and the cause of Christ , otherwise the adversaries will think , they have cause to triumph , when he is made speechless (though that Christian Martyr-woman , who said , *she could not dispute for Christ , but she could burn for Him* , did sufficiently refell all the Arguments of her Adversaries , which were but meer Sophismes) especially if the maine crime be coloured-over with some alleiged personal fault ; In this , or the like cases , it is necessary , that the accused have pertinent , clear and pungent reasons of his actions , in readines , whether to refell what is falsely alleiged ; or to defend what is just and righteous. Now whence shall this be had , or from whom is it to be expected , but from Him , who hath promised that it shall be given them .

Right Suffering is God's gift. 185

in that hour *Mat. 10. vers. 19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought, how, or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you, in that same hour, what ye shall speak.* And therefore Christian suffering, unto which this is so necessary, must be given of God also.

9. Such as are suffering for Christ's sake, had need to be very fixed, stayed, and stedfast, in adhering to their Principles, as unshaken with any winde of temptation; for cedeing and yeelding, in matters of a Testimony, dishonoureth the Lord, whose truth is questioned; encourageth and confirmeth Enemies, and stumbleth and marreth the confidence of others; therefore such as would suffer aright, must stand to the truth, and not yeeld in an hooft, nor sell or give away the least point of truth. And this fixed, and stedfast adhering to the truth, is of God alone. *He who stablisheth us in Christ, is God 2 Cor. 1: vers. 21.* And when Paul is pressing the *Thessalonians* to stand fast *2 Thes. 2. vers. 15.* He addeth *Vers. 16, 17.* Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our father ——— Comfort your hearts, and stablish you, in every good word and work.
And.

And therefore so must the Christian suffering be of Him alone.

10. A Christian sufferer for Christ must have a Christian love to Christ; for it is this that maketh the sufferers not count their life dear to the death for Christ, and maketh them hazard all for Him; they love him better, than they love Father, or Mother, or any thing else in a world, and therefore are content to lose all for Him, and His sake. Now, love is of God, who is love. *1 Joh. 4. vers. 7, 8.* And it is one of the fruites of the Spirit *Gal. 5. vers. 22.* And must be from the God of all grace; for we love Him, because He first loved us *1 Joh. 4. vers. 19.* And therefore so must this right suffering be from Him.

11. Before one can suffer aright for Christ, and His cause, he must be dead and mortified to this world, and to all the Riches, Honours and Pleasures, to the lust of the eye, to the lust of the flesh, and to the pride of life, as *Iohn* speaketh *1 Iob. 2: 16.* Yea he must be dead to himself, and to his own life, otherwayes these will hang as weights upon him, and hinder his swimeing through the sea of affliction and persecution. Now this self
denial

Right Suffering is God's gift. 187

denial being the singular gift of God, suffering, unto which it is so necessary, must be His peculiar gift also.

12. Unto Christian Suffering for the sake of Christ, it is necessarily requisite, that the Sufferer have fresh Influences from the Spirit of God, to stirre up the graces of God in him, and to carry him thorow; for if these be withheld, a very *Peter* will sinfully and shamefully deny his Master: now, it is unquestionable that these Influences must needs flow from the fountaine, and be the effects of Gods grace and love; and therefore so must Christian suffering be, which cannot be without these.

By these particulars the *first* point is clear: And as for the *Second Viz.* That this gift of suffering is purchased by Christ, is a fruit of His death, and is obtained for His sake, and bestowed in His behalfe. *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ to suffer,* we need not insist upon it, seing it is certaine, and undeniable, that every gift of this kind, and every spiritual grace, is purchased to us by the blood and merites of Christ; He laid down His life to purchase heaven to His own, and every thing else, that was needful for them, in the way

way to heaven. In Christ are we blessed with all spiritual blessings, in celestials *Ephes. 1. vers. 3.* Every spiritual blessing cometh to us, in and through the Covenant of Grace, and of this Covenant Christ is the Mediator; so that every blessing of the Covenant is purchased by Him. This is also manifest from what was said, in confirmation of the former Point; for all these favours, requisite unto a Christian suffering, as the grace of Faith, Hop, Courage, Stedfastness, Patience; Humility &c. are purchased to us by Christ; and consequently so must this gift of Christian suffering be purchased also.

The *third* point followeth, *to wit,* That this gift of Suffering Christianly for the sake of Christ, is a gift, in some respect, beyond faith: for the Apostle saith. It was given to these *Philippians*, *not only to beleve, but also to suffer*, which expression, *not only, but also*, importeth a sort of gradation, and giveth some eminency and excellency unto the last; as *Joh. 5: vers. 18.* and *13. vers. 9.* *Act. 19. vers. 27.* and *21. vers. 13.* *Rom. 5. vers. 3, 11.* and *8. vers. 23.* and *13: 5.* *2 Cor. 7: 7.* and *8: 10.* *Ephes. 1. vers. 21.* and else where. We shall

Right Suffering is God's gift. 189

shall clear this further, by mentioning some particulars.

1. This Christian-suffering for the cause of Christ, doth presuppose Faith, as we said above; and so must be a gift given, over and above faith.

2. Many have the gift of faith, who never receive this gift of suffering; many precious beleevers go to their grave in peace, and know not what it is to die for witnessing to the Name of Jesus, on a scaffold, or to suffer at the hands of Persecuters, upon that account. It is reported of famous *Luther*, that he oft wished and praied for this; and yet God thought fit, he should die on his bed in peace. This gift then of suffering, not being common to all, to whom faith is common, must have some peculiar excellency, as being more rare.

3. Yea even all those beleevers, who are called to suffer for the cause of Christ, cannot alwayes win to this gift of Christian & Valiant Suffering for the sake of Christ, but through temptation and carnal fear over-powering them, may for a time shrink, cede and fainte, and thus wrong their own peace, harden the Adversaries, discourage the Godly, wrong the Cause,
and

and dishonour the Lord ; as we see in *Peter* , when he denied his Master , and that with Curses and Execrations , whose faith yet failed not , the Lord having prayed for that *Luk. 22: 32.*

4. Though it be a matter of no small , difficulty to beleeve ; yet some may win over that difficulty , that cannot win over the difficulty of Suffering Christianly , in bearing Testimony to the truth of Jesus , as that instance of *Peter* cleareth. It being then a matter of greater difficulty to suffer aright , than to beleeve , this gift of suffering must be a greater gift.

5. Unto Suffering for the sake of Christ , in a right manner , there is requisite (as we saw above) a greater concurrence of the graces of the Spirit of God ; & a necessity also for a greater concurrence of divine Influences , to carry the soul thorough.

6. This suffering for Christ's sake hath a special piece of honour attending it : Hence the Apostles rejoiced , that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ *Act. 5. vers. 41.* And *Peter 1 Pet. 4. vers. 13.* desireth those , he wrote unto , to rejoice , in that lot ; and *Paul Rom. 5. vers. 3.* saith, *we glory in tribulations*

Right Suffering is God's gift. 191

lations; yea he speaketh of this, as in some respect, a step above their *rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, Vers. 2.* for he bringeth it in, with a *not only so, but also.* Which manifestly cleareth the excellency of this gift of Suffering.

7. Christian Suffering for the Name of Christ, is a common and publick good, being edifying to the Body, and so advantageous to many: A mans faith is mainly profitable to himself, and is thereunto ordained; But Suffering in a right manner is profitable unto many; to Enemies and Persecutors it giveth a dash, and leaveth some ground of conviction; and Friends are much encouraged thereby; yea the whole Church receiveth advantage; for thereby a noble Testimony is given to the truth, and the bloud of the Martyres becometh the seed of the Church.

8. Suffering for the cause of Christ, in a Christian manner, maketh the Sufferers to be like Christ and conforme to the Captaine of their Salvation; as one now graduat, or advanced to an higher class; Christ came to bear witness to the truth, and suffered upon the account of bearing Testimony to the truth; and those, who are honoured with this special gift, are made

made in a special manner conforme unto Him, and thus are greatly honoured.

9. As Sufferers for the cause of Christ are thereby advanced to great honour and dignity, so are they usually admitted to great nearness and access to God; the Lord loveth to let out of himself unto them, in a special manner: that is a confirming expression, which we have 1 Pet. 4: 14. *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you.* Sufferers have, even here, an happiness, and an happiness upon the account of their suffering (were it but) reproach, for the Name of Christ; and who can tell how rich and great this happiness is, and wherein it consisteth? The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them; this Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of glory, working in them all His glorious graces, whereby He prepar-eth them for glory, and comforteth their souls, as if they were in the suburbs of glory, resideth in them, and resteth upon them, as the sure earnest of glory: wherefore this Suffering for His Name must be a great matter.

10. This Christian suffering for the Name of Christ maketh way for a greater degree

Right Suffering is God's gift. 193

degree in Glory : *If we suffer with Him we shall also reigne with Him*, 2 Tim. 2: vers. 12. *If we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified together*, Rom. 8: vers. 17. There is a noble word to this purpose 2 Cor. 4: vers. 17. *For our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* The Glory, that our momentany Affliction worketh for us, is eternal, and the Weight of that Crown is eternally Weighty, that can never be fully weighed: Nay, It cannot be told by Hyperbole's heaped upon Hyperbole's; all these will come short of expressing the Weight thereof. We finde in the Book of the Reve'. Chap. 7: vers. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. that there were some discernable from others, and more remarkable, having on a distinguishing robe, as a peculiar livery in Glory; They are said to have had *White Robs*, and who were these? Such as came out of great Tribulation. They were made to wear on earth a red livery of blood; but now in glory they are shineing in white: And it is added Vers. 15. &c. *Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night, in his Temple, and He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the Sun light on them any more, for the Lamb,*
1
which

which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of Waters: And shall wipe away all teares from their eyes.

We shall now come to speak something, in order to the improvement of these Truthes, which we have confirmed.

First, The faith of these Truthes would give a check unto several evils, that we are too ready to comply with, in a day of trial, and discover unto us several things, for which we are to check and rebuke ourselves, as

1. Do not some finde an Antipathy at the cross working and striving in them, even when the Cross is yet far off? Do they not finde some averfness of soul therefrom? Now this evil would meet with a check, if these Truthes were beleaved? No beleever findeth any averfness from faith; but he is still desiring more and more of it, and praying, *Lord increase our faith*; for he knoweth how excellent and necessary it is. And now, seing the grace and gift of Suffering is, (as we have shown,) in several respects above and beyond faith, should they be unwilling to receive it, if God shall be pleased to honour them with that? Might not the beleever hence say to himself, are there any of the Gifts of God to be refused, or rejected?

Are

Are not all His Graces and Gifts excellent and lovely? Why doth my heart then so much stand out against this? How is it, that I am not more in love with the Glorious Cross of Christ? Especially seeing it is an honour, that is not conferred on every one, and an honourable Gift, purchased by the precious blood of Christ, that hath purchased nothing that will harme us, or nothing but what is excellent and desirable? Why then am I so little in love with suffering for the sake of Christ? Ought I not to be ashamed of and displeased with my self, upon this account? Ought I not to check this averfness?

2. The faith of this would give a check unto our readiness to shift the Cross, when we are called to make ready for it, and when it seemeth to be at the door: For, would we say, what? Shall we devise meanes to shift suffering for the Cause of Christ, when He is calling us to it? What, shall we meditate a way of shifting and putting away such an honourable Divine Gift, more excellent than faith, in several respects? What unsutable & unworthy carriage must this be? Is it a gift of God, and such a gift of God, and a gift given in the behalfe of Christ, as purchased by His Merites and Death; and shall we thus sinfully, ba'e-

ly and unworthily shift it by our door; and rather sinne, than embrace it, and make it welcome? What a shame were this?

3. The faith of these things would give a check unto our fool-hardiness and too rash adventuring on sufferings, without a due call; and as if our strength were able to carry us thorow. Too many are too confident, and promise too much upon their own Ability, Parts, Resolution and Strength, as if they stood in need of no more; and as if this Suffering for the sake of Christ were not a pure gift of Grace, that must come down from above from the Father of Lights, through Jesus Christ. Now the faith of these Truthes, would check these thoughts. Any that know what true faith is would be dissatisfied with such, as would talk of it, as a thing in their power, and which they could put in Act, when they pleased, because they would know, that such boasted of what they had not; and that faith was not in their Power, but was the special and purchased gift of God. So would the right thoughts of this put us from ever thinking to venture on suffering, in our own strength, & put us to look to Him, from whom every good gift and every perfect gift

Right Suffering is God's gift. 197

gift cometh , through Jesus Christ , and waite on Him for it.

4. The faith of this would likewise rebuke our readiness to faine , when we are called to suffer , or engaged in it ; and put a check to our saying : Alas , we will never win thorow this Sea of Affliction , one day or other , we shall shamefully fall , and betray the cause , and so come off with disgrace ; and would put us to look off ourselves , and to look up unto the giver , who giveth freely : and to the Purchaser , who will receive all that He hath purchased. Must we not thus carry , in order to faith , when we beginne to feare , that it shall fail us ; Do we not comfort ourselves with this , That faith is the free gift of God , and is purchased by Christ , and is not of ourselves ? And why should we not do so , in order to suffering , which is also the free gift of God , and is purchased by Christ ? When we are like to be discouraged with the thoughts of our own weakness , and unfitness to contend with Horsemen , and with the swellings of Jordan ; should we not look upon it , as the gift of God , whereby He can make us strong , even when we are weak , to the Glory of His free Grace ? And when we are discouraged with the thoughts of our unworthiness , and thereupon inferre , that

God will never honour us, with bearing faithful Testimony unto His Truth; should we not, in humility and in the acknowledgment of our own Unworthiness, and Provocations, look to Him, as the great and free giver, who giveth nothing because of our merites: He gave us faith freely, notwithstanding of our former Provocations and great unworthiness; and may He not also give us this gift, when He calleth us to the duty, freely through Jesus, the great Purchaser?

5. The faith of this would give a check to that humore, whereby some are ready to sacrifice to their own net, and to burn incense to their own drag; that is, to be puffed up, and vainly proud of their carriage, when they have been helped to carry honestly in a day of trial, as if they by their wit and courage had done it, or as if it had not been given them, in that houre: what would such have to be proud of, who beleeved, that this grace was freely given to them, and that, in the behalfe of Christ? And who saw, that if it had not been so, they had never been able to have endured the storme; Would not they see cause to say, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto God be Glory;*

Secondly, From these Truthes, we may be

Right Suffering is God's gift. 199

be informed of several things, the knowledge of which may be useful, in an evil day: As

1. We may hence be convinced of the difficulty of Suffering Christially, for the Cause of Christ: It is not Natural Courage, Stourtness, or Fear of Shame, or the like, that will be able to carry thorow: No, no, A Divine purchased Grace and Gift must be had, or there will be no standing. Many, in a calme day, may think it no great matter to suffer upon Christ's account, and may seem very resolute, willing and ready to suffer; but when the storme beginneth to blow to purpose, and they are put to it, they finde it some other thing, than they imagined: And what wonder? It is not a thing that Nature can command, nor Natural Strength and Courage can enable for; but Divine Help is required thereunto. It must be given, and given in Christ: and this faith, there is no small difficulty in it.

2. We may hence see a fundamental Reason, why some are honoured with suffering for the Cause of Christ, and others not; It is the free gift of God, and purchased by Christ, and so is bestowed onely on those, for whom it is purchased, and on whom free grace will bestow it. As also, whence it

I 4 cometh

cometh to passe, that of two, who are both called to witness to the truth by suffering, one is honourably helped thorow, the other fainteth. The one hath got the free gift, the other not: It is true, other provoking causes may come here into consideration, as bringing this on; but yet this is principally to be considered, our sins may provoke the Lord to withhold this gift; and when it is not given, there will be no suffering for the sake of Christ, in a Christian manner.

3. We may hence be informed concerning the ground of this honour being bestowed upon any: It is not for their eminency of parts, or worth, or any such thing in them; but purely of free grace, and on the behalfe of Christ.

Thirdly, Upon the ground of these Truthes, we may read several Duties, called for at our hands, in a day of Suffering. As

1. In such a day, when stormes are at hand, we should not be troubled with perplexity and anxiety of Spirit; nor disquiet or discourage ourselves with feares and apprehensions; that we shall fainte in the day of Adversity, and shall not be in case to stand stedfast in the storme: For our strength and standing is not in our own hands, It is in Gods.

Right Suffering is God's gift. 209

Gods Hand; His gift must make us stand, and nothing else.

2. We should be looking off ourselves and all that is within us, and not think, that any thing of that kind will be able to carry us thorow; But fix our eye upon the gracious Giver, and lay hold on Christ by faith, and expect the thorow-bearing Gift and Grace, in and through Him; In such a day, we would do well to renounce all within us; that we may not lean to it, and so betake ourselves alone to the fountaine of free grace, and expect what is necessary in that day, from Him, who giveth freely and upbraiderth not.

3. And in order to this, seing this gift is bestowed only in and through Christ, we should study before hand, to get our Interest in Christ made up, that so we may have ground to expect a grant of this gift for His sake; for none else can expect this, but such as are reconciled to God through Christ.

3. We would also labour to be in good termes with God, and to be keeping our Conscience void of offence both before God and Man, lest He be provoked to with-hold this gift from us. When we have been walking neer God, and keeping carefully Communion with Him,

~~We~~ may go to Him with the greater Confidence and Boldness, and ask this gift, through Christ.

Fourthly, We may hence see, what Duties we are especially called to, in the day, when we are actually and particularly called to bear witness to the Truth, and to suffer upon the account thereof. As

1. We should make the Cross of Christ welcome, because it is Gods send; all that God sendeth should be welcome; This is a special Gift, and a purchased Gift; and therefore it should be heartily embraced, both because of the Giver, and because of the Purchaser. It is true, flesh and blood have no will of Suffering, nature is averse from it; yet Spiritual Reason and Grace should say, God will give me nothing on the behalfe of Christ, but what is good and necessary for me; and seeing Suffering for Christs sake is of that nature; and is so excellent a Gift, beyond faith it self, in so many respects, why should I storne? Why should I quarrel upon that account? Why should I not rather embrace it with love, and give it an heartsome welcome?

2. Not only upon this account should we accept of that favour heartily and cheerfully

fully; but also we should accept thereof with Joy and Gladness, rejoicing that free grace would put that singular honour upon us: As we had cause to rejoice, when He was pleased to single us out from many others, no worse than we were, and bestow faith upon us; so have we cause to rejoice, in His pitching upon us, and going by many others, better than we are, in the matter of Suffering. Should we not count it all Joy, when, for Christs sake, we fall into manifold temptations, because the Lord is thereby honouring and enriching us with this rare and precious Gift? Should we not, upon this account, Glory in Tribulations, as in so many enriching gifts, freely bestowed on us of God, and purchased by Christ?

3. Hereby should we learne to beware of fretting or repining at the trouble, that the Crosse and Testimony of Jesus bringeth with it; and choose rather to be thankful for such an honourable gift, as this Suffering for the sake of Christ is: Nay the more our trouble and harassing be, let us look upon ourselves as the more honoured of God; and therefore called to be thankful and to blest; seing we shou'd blesse Him, for all His Benefites; and this is among the chiefe of His benefites.

4. We should then be wholly dead to ourselves, and to any stock of strength or courage, that we may imagine to be in us; that we may not think of standing upon our own legs; for these will fail us: And should fix our eye on this Father of Lights, from whom every good gift must come; and by faith depend upon Him, and seek this from Him, in prayer through faith. We have encouragement now to go to God, through Jesus, to seek this gift, because it is a gift, and because it is a gift purchased by Christ.

5. And especially should this be our exercise, when at any time, we finde our heart like to faine, and our strength like to faill us, and we are like to sinck. Then should we double our suites, and renew our acts of Faith, upon the ground of Christs Purchase, and the Fathers Grace and Readiness to bestow what we need, and cannot now want, of His own Free Grace, and good Will.

Lastly, There is here a sure ground of great Comfort laid down; and this is the plain scope of the words; for the Apostle is comforting these Christians of the Church of *Philippi*, against the Crosse, with this, (among others) that to suffer for Christ's sake was a gift of God, and a gift bestowed upon

Right Suffering is God's gift. 205

upon them through Jesus Christ: So that there is here comfort against many Discom-
ragments As

1. Against the thoughts of the greatness of the difficulty: we are ready to cry out; Oh we cannot wrestle thorow this Cross, wherein are so many difficulties, and each more insuperable than another: But this may comfort us. That there is a gift of God for it, which will make all difficulties superable: we of ourselves, as of ourselves, cannot wrestle thorow; but this gift can enable; and that there is nothing called for at our hands, but what this gift will enable us to do: this gift will bear all our Charges, and keep our heads above, when swimming thorow the most dangerous Seas,

2. This may comfort against the thoughts of Rageing, Strong and Cruel Adversaries; for this gift will enable; if it be given to Suffer, we shall be helped to Suffer all their Rage and Cruelty, and not fear, or fainte.

3. It may comfort us against the thoughts of our own weakness: we are but like a reed shaken in the winde, and cannot endure much: Yet as when the gift of faith was given all our corruption and unbeleeffe, and all the Power of Satan could not hinder

our closeing with Christ; so, when this Gift of Suffering is bestowed, through Jesus Christ, all our inward weakness and averfness shall not hinder our through-bearing: We shall then go in the strength of that gift, without wearying or fainting; for we shall then be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might.

4. It may Comfort against the apprehensions of our own sinfulness and great unworthiness, whereby we may fear, that He shall forsake us, because of our provocations, and not helpe us thorow: For this being the gift of God, and given in the behalfe of Christ, we cannot think, that it can be given for any worth in us: What ever our sins be, we may look to Him, when we are called to bear witness to His Truth, who is a great and a free Giver, and have hope that He will make us Partakers of that free Gift, in and through Christ. Beggars look for a free almes, though they can plead nothing but poverty and want; and are far from pleading their own worth and merites: He gave us faith, at first, which we neither did, nor could merite; and why may He not also give us this gift, when He calleth us to the duty?

5. It may comfort against the faintings of others, whom we apprehend to have been

been more able to ride thorow the storme, than we are: We are ready to say, How can such as I am stand, when the like of Peter fainted so foulely? But this is comfortable, that it is not any stock of Grace, or inward Strength, Resolution and natural Courage, or the like, that will carry thorow; but the gift of God; and without this gift of God, the strongest will not stand; and with it, the weakest will be enabled to stand-out the trial: And when God denieth this for a time unto strong Christians, for His own Holy Ends, He may give it to the weak, and so carry them thorow; that all may see, it is His gift that doth the thing, and nothing else.

6. This may also comfort us, against the thoughts of our unpreparedness to meet with the trial; for the matter of our throw-bearing dependeth not upon our fitness, and preparation for the Exercise; but upon the Gift of God; and this gift will be more glorious and excellent in their eyes, who knowing themselves to have been very far out of case, for such a trial, were yet enabled by vertue of that gift to stand, and to suffer for the sake of Christ.

7. So it may comfort against the sorrowful thoughts of their former Miscarriages, Faintings and sinful Shunnings of a faithful
Testi-

Testimony, which may readily cause such apprehend, that the Lord will stand by them no more, but forsake them, as they did formerly forsake Him: This, I say, may comfort them, that it is a gift, and a gift of God, and a gift, purchased by the blood of Jesus, by which they must be helped; and what is of that nature, may be given, notwithstanding of all that hath past; all Gods gifts being free, and the more unworthy they be, on whom they are bestowed, the glory of free grace shineth forth the more, and the worth and value of the Merits of Christ is more conspicuous.

CONSIDERATION. XVI.

The Sufferings of Christs Servants are for the advantage of the Church.

When persecution ariseth especially against Christs eminent Servants and Followers, then many are ready to draw strange Conclusions, in their own minds, touching the Church: and to think that the Church shall be utterly extirpated: little considering the wonderful Workings of God,

God, who, by that meane, which, to them, threatneth ruine, is bringing about the welfare and advantage of the Church, to the Glory of His Power and Wisdom. Whereas if it were beleev'd, that even by persecution, raised against the Preachers and eminent Professours, the Church should be no loſer, the thoughts of such a Dispensation could not cause much conſternation.

In order to the ſpeaking a few words unto this, we would take notice of a few Inſtances, which will confirme the truth thereof. *Act. 8: verſ. 1.* It is ſaid, *that at that time, there was a great persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem and they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the Regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apoſtles; that is,* all the Church-Officers were forced to flee, after Stephen was ſtoned. But did this any harme to the Church? No; but did tend rather to the furtherance of the Goſpel; for it is added *verſ. 4.* *Therefore they that were ſcattered went every where, preaching the word;* ſo that by this meanes, the Goſpel was ſpread throughout the Regions about, and that more quickly, than otherwayes, in all probability, it would have been. When Paul is ſpeaking of his Sufferings *Col. 1: 24.* he ſaith, *they were for them, and not ſo only,*
but

but for the whole body, the Church. Who now rejoyce in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behinde of the afflictions of Christ, in my flesh for his bodies sake, which is the Church. So 2 Cor. 1: 6. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation and Salvation, 2 Tim. 2: 10. Therefore I endure all things for the Elects sake. Another plaine Instance we have Phil. 1: 12. But I would, ye should understand, Brethren, that the things, which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.

1. For further clearing up of this, we shall mention some particular Advantages, which the Church reapeth by the Sufferings of Christ's Eminent Servants and Followers.

1. Their sufferings, upon the account of Truth, serve much to Strengthen and Establish the rest of the people of God, in the faith; for the truth is thereby much confirmed unto them, and made to have some deeper Impression in their hearts, when they see, that the Truthes, which those Servants of Christ delivered unto them, were such, as the Preachers themselves were perswaded of, as truthes, and as weighty truthes; yea and such, as they are ready to seal with their blood. It is for this cause, that Paul maketh mention
of

of his sufferings, in that Epistle to the *Colossians*; for he is endeavouring to settle them in the faith, and to keep them stedfast in the day of Temptation. He would have them *vers. 23. Continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.* And because they might have said, what can we do, when you are put to such sufferings, and are shut up in Prison? He obviateth this by saying, *I rejoyce in my sufferings for you.* As if he had said, My Imprisonment and Sufferings are not to your disadvantage, but for your good; and upon that account I rejoyce in them. So that this is a notable mean to keep others stedfast in the truth: As, upon the other hand, it is a potent and forcible mean to shake poor people out of their hopes, and to confirme many in Atheisme and Infidelity, when they see such, as have been preaching forth truthes unto them, refusing to stand to them, and avow them, in a day of Temptation: Hence is it, that Satan, seeing this so much for his advantage, doubleth the force of his Temptations and Assaults against such, knowing that the fall of one such may endanger many, and occasion the staggering of multitudes.

2. By this meanes the Gospel is made to spread

112 Confid. 16. The Church

spread more, and and that not only by occasion of the banishment of Preachers; as we see *Act. 8.* but also, that by reason of their very Imprisonment or Persecution to the death. many will be made to enquire after the cause, why such are put to so hard sufferings; and after enquire, some may be made to see, that their Cause is just and righteous, howbeit they be condemned, & thus may be brought to like their cause, & befriend it, & to hate the carriage of the Persecuters: So that the Gospel-truth is no loser, by all the loss that the Preachers suffer, upon the account thereof; for when strangers observe that such men of Understanding, judgment and Conscience, are ready and willing to confirme the truth of what they assert with their blood, and to suffer any thing rather than deny the same, they beginne to search more seriously after the matter, and to consider its consequences, and come at length to affect that way more in their heart; an Instance whereof we have *Phil. 1: 12. 13.* He told them *vers. 12.* that what hardships had befallen him; had fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, and in the next *verse* he sheweth, how this was, saying, *so that my bonds in Christ are manifest, in all the Palace, and in all other places.* The report of his Imprisonment,

ment, for the Name of Christ, went far and neer; so that even *Cæsars* Court ringed againe with the noise of it, and they are talking of it among themselves; and severals are converted to the truth thereby, and brought to embrace the Gospel; for he tels us *Chap. 4: 22.* That there were Saints in *Cæsar's* household, *all the saints salute you, obey they that are of Cæsar's household.*

3. When the Lords eminent Servants are persecuted upon the account of truth, the Lord is (to speak so) more engaged to do for His Church, to owne her, and to counterwork the plots and wicked devices of Satan; and this He is pleased, for the glory of His name, to declare and manifest, by making thereby the Gospel to flourish more, in power and life; and to bless the laboures of a few the more. The Church did never thrive better, than in the Primitive times, during these hore persecutions. In time of persecution, the Church is purer, for few adhere to the truth, but such, who have received the truth, as it is in Jesus, and have the grace of God in them in truth; then are there fewest hypocrites to be found in the Church, the heat of persecution driveth them away, and driveth the upright hearted neerer to God, so that their grace & communion with God groweth,

eth, their mortification to the things of this life increaseth, and they become more and more crucified unto the world, and the world unto them: So that howbeit the outward bulk of Professours diminish; yet the true hearted grow more lively, strong and vigorous, and the inward man is renewed day by day 2 Cor. 4: 16. So that really the Church suffereth no loss, but is a gainer.

4. By this meanes, many other faithful, zealous and honest-hearted Servants of God, are made (through the Lord's wonderful defeating of the Counsels of Satan) more bold & forward, in owning & declaring the truth: The devil thinks, by the sufferings of some eminent Servants, to discourage and faine many, as supposing that they will be affrighted from their duty; but the grace and power of God worketh out the contrary event: As we see Phil. 1: 14. where another fruit of Paul's bonds and Imprisonment is added. *And many of the Brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word, without fear.* So that the Church is a gainer, through the Lord's wonderful working, by all these sufferings.

5. There is hereby an encouraging example laid before others: Ius no small
advan-

advantage unto particular Beleevers, in a time of Persecution, to know of some precedent, of some that have gone thorow the foord before them: Therefore saith the Apostle James Chap. 5: 10. *Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of Patience; so that such Examples are refreshing, and helpful unto their Constancy and Stedfastness; when they see others standing fast in the faith, in the midst of all persecutions, that they meet with, they are animated unto the like stedfastness, and to resolution, in adhering fixedly to the truth: such examples will make even a timorous man wax bold; and the exemplary carriage of sufferers is very encouraging and comfortable, wherefore the Apostle saith 2 Cor. 1: 6. whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation. Therefore these Sufferings are much for the advantage of the Church.*

6. Hereby is the Church awakened from security, and made to look out for a suffering lot; when thus it is done to the green tree, they are made to take Warning; Such a dispensation is as the sounding of the trumpet for an alarme; and this is no small advantage, when she is raised to her feet, and put in a postour, and made ready for
the

the battel ; then she needeth not fear a surprisal ; but hath time to prepare, and make ready for the storme.

In order to the Improvement of this Consideration , we would

1. Beware to conclude that all is gone , when we hear or see Christs eminent Servants put to sad sufferings : We are ready to wonder why the Lord should suffer such and such things to be done ; why He should suffer such sad things to befall His eminent and useful Servants, who cannot well be missed, one whereof is worth an hundred, so that the Death or Imprisonment of one such threatneth more destruction to the Church, than the loss of many : But we know not the thoughts of the Lord ; we know not what He is designing , and what He mindeth to effectuate thereby. And if we beleev- ed , that even such a dispensation as this could do no harme to the Church ; how little would we be troubled at it ? If we saw, what an effectual way this were , in the steady , unerring Hand of God , to bring about the spiritual advantage of the Church, how would we lay our hands upon our mouth, and be silent ? And though we can not see in particular, what advantage the Church is like to get, by the taking away of such, as were as Pillars of the Church :

Yet

Yet we should by faith rest assured, that the Head, and Husband of the Church, would not suffer such a Dispensation to come, if He knew not, how to bring good and advantage out of it; and that thereby good seed was sown, which, though accompanied with teares and bloud, yet should yeeld full sheaves at length, which should be brought home with Joy.

2. We would do well to search ourselves, at such a time, to see if we, as particular members of the Church, be reaping any advantage by what we hear and see of the Sufferings of Christs eminent Servants; as for example, see if thereby the truth of the Gospel become more riveted in our souls, & we becometh more rooted in the faith and assurance thereof, and more fixed in our Resolution to adhere thereunto; See if Truth becometh lovely & desireable to us upon this account; See if grace be growing more within, and if our hearts and affections be loosened more and more from the things of a world, and we be prepared more to quite all for Christ, and His Cause; See if by the example of others we be more animated, and encouraged to avow and abide

K bide

bide by the truth, cost what it will; See if these newes be raising us out of our bed, and making us prepare for the battel, and make ready for the approaching storme: & if we finde any such advantage thereby, let us blesse Him, who is giving us meat out of the eater, and doing us good by the dear cost and charges of others.

3. This should comfort such, as are called forth to suffer for the Name of Jesus; they need not trouble themselves with thoughts, what shall become of the Church and Interest of Christ; but leave that upon the Lord; and beleieve, that He shall make it contribute to the furtherance of the Gospel, and to the enlairment of His Kingdom; Ministers called to suffer may possibly think, Oh what shall become of the poor people? we cannot get preached unto them, as formerly; but what if God make their stedfastness in suffering more advantagious, than their preachings would have been? What if that edifie more, than many preachings did, or would do? Ought not they, upon this Consideration, rejoyce in their Lot, and suffer cheerfully, that Christs Interest may prosper more thereby? What know they, what influence their Christian carriage

The Lord is King in Zion. 219

riage may have on all On-lookers, yea and on Enemies and Persecuters themselves, beside what confirmation friends may have thereby?

CONSIDERATION XVII.

The Lord Reigneth in Zion.

BEleevers are not like unto the Subjects of Kings, here on earth, who may be dethroned, and their Crowns may fall from their Heads, and the Scepters be taken out of their hands, and they may lose all the Ensignes of Royalty; and when it falleth out so (as is done many a time) Subjects have but cold Comfort, in looking to the Throne, when it hath forsaken him, that sat thereon. But Beleevers have a King, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever, and whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. It cannot then but be strange, that when Men, who have all their temporal happiness hanging upon the standing of Kings of Clay, can rejoyce in adversity, when they have any

K. 2 hope

hope of their King's recovering of his lost Throne and Kingdome, though the grounds of their Hop be most disputable and uncertaine; that the Children of God, in the day of their Adversity, can draw so little Comfort from the sure and certaine Grounds of Hope, which they have to look to. If Christs Crown and Throne were not surer, than the fading and perishing *Regalia* of Men, what would beleev-ers do? Whither could they go for consolation, in the day of their Distress and Anguish? But now, seing their King is not like the Kings of the Earth, why are they so heartless, in the day of their extremity? Sure, the Reason must be, because they beleve not, that He is such a King, as He is indeed; or they know not how to improve, to any spiritual Advantage, such a noble Ground of Consolation, as this is. Wherefore it may be useful to speak a little unto this: And so we shall *first* lay down some *Propositions*, clearing up this Truth, and *next* some *Conclusions*, pointing out the improvement, that may be made thereof.

First, As for the *Propositions*, take these following;

1. The Lord standeth under the Relation

The Lord is King in Zion. 221

on of a King to His Church and People; He hath taken to himself that Name and Title: and accordingly we finde them eyeing this, in the day of their Distress; So *David Psal. 5: vers. 2. and 84: v. 2.* embraceth Him, crying, *My King and my God:* and he comforteth himself with this *Psf. 10. v. 16. The Lord is King for ever and ever.* And the Church crieth out *Psal. 74: v. 2. God is my King of old:* and comforteth herself with this *Esaï. 33: v. 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us.* So doth the Lord make a sweet promise of this, for the Comfort of His people, *Hos. 13: v. 10. I will be thy King.* Whereby we see, that there is such a relation betwixt God and His People, that will yeeld Comfort, in an evil day.

2. He is not a King, that is far off; but is neer at hand, in the midst of His Kingdom and People: And this is also comfortable: Kingdomes may have a King, and yet be little the better of Him; he may be far away, and unable to help them, in the day of their greatest necessity; But it is not so with Zions King, He is alwayes at hand, in the midst of His People: He is established King in Zion. *Psal. 2: v. 6. Yet I*

have set my King (saith the Father of His Son, the Mediator) *upon my holy hill Zion.* His whole Kingdome is, as it were, his Throne, and there He sitteth, as King on his Throne; and He is placed and fixed there by a sure and unchangable Decree. That question of *Jeremiah Chap. 8: v. 19.* putteth the matter out of question, *Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?* So *Pf. 99: 2. The Lord is great in Zion.* Zions King then is a great King, in the midst of her.

3. Zions King is a King actually reigning upon His Throne, and exercising His Kingly Office; not like a King, imprisoned, or put out of a capacity of helping, or relieving his distressed Subjects; for He reigneth *Pfal. 93: v. 1. and 97: 1. and 99: v. 1.* It is the bringing of good tidings, the publishing of Peace, the bringing of good tidings of good, the publishing of Salvation, to say unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth Esai. 52: v. 7.* Zions King is not a King outted and dethroned; but actually reigning and swaying His Scepter, exerceing His Kingly Office and Government.

4. Zions King is an everlasting King, He shall reigne for ever and ever: He cannot

not be dethroned, He must reigne until all His Enemies be made His footstool 1 Cor. 15: v. 25. for He is settled on His throne by an everlasting and unchangable decree Ps. 2: v. 6, 7. And therefore He is called the King eternal 1 Tim. 1: 17. That is a sweet and comfortable Word of Promise Ps. 146: v. 10. The Lord shall reigne for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Micah 4: 7. And the Lord shall reigne over them, in mount Zion, from hence forth, even for ever. Psal. 10: v. 6. The Lord is King for ever and ever. And Psal. 45: 6. Thy Throne, ô God, is for ever & ever. Jer. 10: 10. The Lord—— is an everlasting King; and so His Kingdome is an everlasting Kingdom; for it is said Luk. 1: 33. He shall reigne over the House of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdome there shall be no end. So Revel. 11: 15. And the Seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, the Kingdomes of this world, are become the Kingdomes of the Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reigne for ever and ever.

5. Not onely doth this King reigne in the midst of Zion, His Kingdome and Throne; but He ruleth in the midst of His Enemies Psal. 110: 2. This is advantageous and comfortable; For He can reach

them a blow, when He will: And all their Consultations, and Cabinet Counsels, are well known to Him; He ruleth in the midst of them, and over-ruleth all their Plots and Actions, as He seeth good; & is working out His own holy ends and designs by what they are doing: Hence it followeth ver. 5, 6. That He shall strike thorow Kings, in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the Heathen; He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many Countries. Other Kings must make use of Spies and Intelligencers, to know the purposes and motions of their Enemies; and after all their paines remaine ignorant; or if they come to some knowledge thereof, be unable to prevent the mischief designed: But this King ruleth, as Commander in chiefe, among the very Enemies, though they know it not.

6. This King of Zion, is a mighty and great King, He is excellent in Power & Majesty; and therefore is stiled King of Kings Revel. 17: 14. He is the blessed and only Potentat, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords 1 Tim. 6: 15. He hath on His thigh and on his Vesture, a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords Revel. 19: 16. And therefore

The Lord is King in Zion. 225

fore by Him Princes rule, and all the Judges of the earth vers. 16. He is a King therefore endued with Supream Power and Authority, higher than the Kings of the earth, whose petty Sovereignty is as nothing compared with His.

7. As He is a Mighty and Powerful King; so is He a Righteous and just King. He shall reigne in righteousness. Esai. 32: 1. The scepter of His Kingdome is a right scepter Psal. 45: 6. He loveth righteousness, and hateth wickedness vers 7. just and true are all His wayes, who is King of Saints. Revel, 15: 3. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne Psal. 97: 2. Yea the King's strength loveth judgment, He establisheth equity, He executeth judgment and equity in Jacob Psal. 99: 4. His strength and Power needeth not be terrible unto his Subjects, for His throne is a throne of judgement, and His scepter is a scepter of Righteousness: All His Regalia have this engraven on them, to the great comfort of His Subjects.

8. He is a King, that is clothed with Majestie and Terrour; and so is able to affright and strike terrour in the heart of the greatest & proudest Adversaries The Lord reigneth, and He is clothed with Majesty Psal

93: 1. This mighty one girdeth His sword on His thigh, marcheth with Glory and Majesty, and in Majesty he rideth prosperously Psal 45: 3, 4, 5. The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all people, and His name is great and terrible. Psal. 99: 2, 3. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, a fire goeth before Him, His lightnings enlightened the world, the earth saw and trembled, the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth Psal. 97: vers 2, 3, 4, 5. What Enemy then is able to withstand, or resist this Potentat.

9. He is a King thorowly furnished with all Enduements and necessarie Qualifications for the Exercise of this His Government. Grace is poured into his lips, and He is anoynted with the oile of gladness above His fellows Psal. 45: 2, 7. In Him are hid all the treasurers of wisdom and knowledge; yea in Him dwelleth all the subties of the Godhead bodily Col. 2: 3, 9. He is then a Compleet King, fully able to administrate this Kingly Office, and to performe all Acts belonging thereunto, in truth and faithfulness, and in due season.

10. As he is a King terrible unto the Kings of the earth Psal. 76: 12. and is clothed.

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 117

clothed with Majestie and Power; so is He a King, that is meek and lowlie: Even When He rideth in Majestie, it is upon truth and meekness, as the words may be rendered Psal. 45: 4. When He rideth in state, it is upon Meekness. He is a King that cometh ——— having Salvation, lowlie and rideing upon an Ass, and upon a colt the foale of an ass Zeck. 9: 9. Mat. 21: vers 5. Though He be the terriblest King, that ever was, unto Enemies and Rebels; yet He is all meekness unto his own.

11. This King, who sitteth and ruleth upon His throne, is a Priest upon His throne Zeck. 6: 12, 13. ——— Behold, the man, whose name is the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord; even He shall build the Temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and He shall be a Priest upon his Thron; and the Counsel of peace shall be betwixt them both. Such a King is He, that will not destroy His followers, notwithstanding of their sins and rebellions, but will rather make an attonement for them, lay down His life for them, and become an Intercessour on their behalfe.

12. He is an ancient King. His throne

is established of old ; and He is from everlasting *Psal.* 93: 2. The goings forth of this Ruler of Israel have been of old from everlasting *Micah.* 5: 2. And thus His throne is from everlasting to everlasting.

13. This King of Zion hath Dominion over all the earth, over hell & over death. Angels and Authorities and Powers are made subject unto him *1 Pet.* 3: vers 22. He hath them all under his command and Authority, that He may dispose and make use of them, as He seeth fit. By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, Visible and Invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by Him and for Him *Col.* 1: 16. God hath put all things under His feet, and hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church *Ephes.* 1: 22. He is King of all the earth, and He reigneth over the Heathen *Psal.* 47: 7, 8. All Power in Heaven and in Earth is given unto Him *Mat.* 28: 18.

14. He is a King that rideth prosperously *Psal.* 45: 4. The work He undertaketh doth not misgive in His hand, nothing miscarrieth, or can miscarry, which He undertaketh. He is the happiest sweyer of

of a scepter, that ever was. His purposes fail not; He is not disappointed of his Projects or Designes; all of them succeed well in His hand. *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Esai 53: 10.*

Secondly, From these Comfortable Propositions, let us draw some comfortable Conclusions.

I. The Church and People of God are not an headless, helpless Company, as many take them to be. They have an Head, and a living head, though Strangers and On-lookers do not observe it, nor beleeve it. The world, and the men of the world, look upon them, as a contemptible Company; yet they have a King reigning over them, and a King that shall reigne for ever and ever. They themselves are oft times perplexed and distressed in minde, when they see not one great Person owning them and their Interest, and offering himself to be an head unto them; but if they knew, what an one they had for their Head, Husband and King, they would not be much troubled, though not one great Person in all the earth should owne them and their Cause: So that when all earthly Powers forsake them, and withdraw their helping hand, this may comfort them,

That there is a standing relation betwixt Christ and them, as is betwixt a King and his Subjects, and this relation neither is, nor can be broken off.

2. Let devils & men do what they can, they shall not be able to destroy and root out the People of God. They may intend to destroy, & to cut them off from being a Nation, that the name of Israel may be no more made mention of; and may make a strong combination for this end, as *Psal. 84: vers 4*. But this their Interprise is vaine, they will never be able to effectuate what they designe. Seing He is a King, that reigneth on his Throne, He must have a Kingdom and a People, whom He must governe, and over whom He must svey His scepter. So that whoever would resolve to destroy His Kingdom, must first think of making Him no King; take away His Kingdom, and take away His Scepter too; Himself must be dethroned, ere He have no Kingdome. Enemies then may attempt great things, and promise to themselves great success; but in end, they will prove themselves to be fooles; for He must reigne for ever and ever, and His Kingdom must be to all Generations. He shall reigne for ever, and of His King-
dom.

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 231

dom there shall be no end. *Luk. 1: vers 33.* His people then may be at peace, though they know what great things their Enemies designe against them, and that their cruelty and rage is such, as nothing but their utter overthrow and destruction will satisfie; seing it is all one, as if they should presume to pull **God** from His throne. Let the Devil, and his trustee Livetenant, Antichrist, conspire, and use what Machinations and bloody Devices they will, to destroy the whole Interest of Christ; He must not want Subjects, He shall not want a Kingdom, so long as Sun and Moon endure: Howbeit the people of God may be several times brought very low; yea and almost out of sight, as a Woman fled to the wilderness; yet this exalted King, who is set upon His throne, by an everlasting Decree, must have a Kingdom, & shall have a Kingdom, over which to swey His Scepter.

3. Yea Christ's Kingdom must be a coming and a growing Kingdom *Luk. 1: vers 32.* He must be great, and have the throne of His Father David: Many excellent promises have we of this: *Micah. 4: 1, 2, 3.* But in the last daies, it shall come to passe, that the mountaine of the house of the Lord:

Lord, shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it, and many Nations shall come—and He shall judge among the people. So Esai. 2: 2, 3, 4. Rev. 11. vers 15. And the seventh Angel sound'd, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the Kingdomes of this world, are become the Kingdomes of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reigne for ever & ever. We are taught to pray daily, *Let thy Kingdom come.* Our Lord shall be great to the ends of the earth Micah. 5: 4.

4. Wherefore, Let Enemies do what they can, His Church shall not get much hurt: For so long as He is in the midst of her, she cannot be moved, though the earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, though Mountains shake with the swellings thereof. Psal. 46: 5. It is promised Mic. 4: 7. That the Lord shall reigne over them, in mount Zion; and what followeth? *And thou, ô Toure of the Flock (vers. 8.) the strong hold of the Daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first Dominion, the Kingdome shall come to the Daughter of Jerusalem.*

5. Though it frequently come to passe,
that

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 233

that God's people are brought low, and Enemies get the upper hand; yet Zion's King liveth; and therefore He will Assemble her, that halteth, and will gather her, that is driven out, and her that have been afflicted; and make her that halteth a remnant, & her that was cast off a strong Nation *Mica. 4: 6, 7.* Because He liveth, His members must live also. Seing the Churches Head is above the water, she cannot drown. Wherefore, upon this very ground, that Zions King liveth and reigneth, His Church and People, even while low and under the feet of Enemies, may lift up their head in hop, and be sure that their day of redemption draweth neer; and they may conclude with the Church *Eesai. 33: 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our King: He will save us.* Seing He is King, He can command deliverance *Psal. 44. 4. and work Salvation Psal. 74: 12.* Upon this ground, David inferreth a Delivery and a Victory *Psal. 10: v. 16. The Lord is King for ever and ever, the heathen are perished out of his land.* Enemies will not be able to stand long in Immanuel's Land. It is His work, as King, to deliver and defend His Subjects; and they may be sure, He will

will not deny Himself, He will answer
Cis Title and Relation.

6. When His people see, that all their Strength is gone, and that there is none shut up or left, they are ready to conclude, that all is gone: But what, cannot this King in Zion soon leavy an Army? How easie is it for Him, to speak to dry bones, and make them armed men *Ezek.*

37. When mention was made of this Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth were from of old, and who should stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the Majesty of the Name of the Lord His God *Micah. 5: 4.* It is added, *This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our Land, and when he shall trade in our Palaces; then shall we raise against him Seven shepherds and eight Principal men, and they shall waste the Land of Assyria with the sword, and the Land of Nimrod, in the entrance thereof. Thus shall He deliver us, from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our Land, and treadeth within our borders. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentils, in the midst of many people, as a Lion among the beasts of the forest, as the young Lion among the Flocks of sheep — Thine hand shall be lift up upon thine Adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be*

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 235

be cut off vers. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. When His people are brought very low, so that, in all probability, they shall not be able to raise up themselves; then this King can help the business, He can raise up an invincible army, out of lame sick souldiers. He can make Jerusalem a cup of trembling, and a burdensome stone; for all people Zech. 12: 2, 3. He can make the Governours of Judah like on heart of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand & on the left ver. 5. He can make Him, that is feeble among them, like David, and the house of David, as God, as an Angel of the Lord before them v. 8. Out of Him cometh the corner, out of Him cometh the nail, out of him the battel bow ——— and He can make them to be as mighty men, which tread down, as the mire of the street, in the battel; and He can strengthen the house of Judah. Zech 10: 4, 5, 6. He can bend Judah for himself, and fill the bow with Ephraim, & raise up Zions sons against their Enemies Zech. 9: 13: He can make poor worm Jacob, a new sharp threshing Instrument having teeth; and say to them, thou shalt thresh the mountains; and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff &c. Esai. 41: 14, 15.

7. This

7. This Consideration speaketh dread and terrour unto Enemies; for He is a King, that is terrible to the Kings of the earth. He maketh the Earth, and the heavens to tremble, the hills melt and quake before him; & what then can weak man do? What will they be, in the hands of the Almighty, who shaketh Nations? *The Lord reigneth, Let the earth tremble, He sitteth between the Cherubims, Let the earth be moved Psal. 99: 1.* At the wrath of this everlasting King, the earth shall tremble; and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation *Jer. 10: 10.* Where then shall His Enemies stand, in the day of His Indignation? We are oft afraid of the terrour of Enemies, but saw we Him, who is our King, we would see, that our Enemies had more cause to be afraid of Him, who is clothed with Majestie: *there goeth a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoureth and coals are kindled by it Psal. 18: vers. 8.* Read what followeth.

8. When we are thinking on the Wit, Skil and Activity, of the Adversaries, let us call to mind, that our King is infinitely beyond them, He searcheth the heart and tryeth the reines; He knoweth
the

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 237

the thoughts afar off : He is privie to all the motions of Adversaries ; He knoweth when they march , and when and where they halt *Eesai. 10: 28, 29.* See what is said of our King *Eesai. 11: 2, 3.* *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom & Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and of the Fear of the Lord ; and shall make him of quick understanding, in the fear of the Lord.* Though the Adversaries should soon out-wit us; yet they will not be able to out-wit Him, who is our King; for the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are in Him : So that it is an easie business for Him, to countermine all their Plots and Machinations. He hath formed all their hearts, and so He knoweth what is in their hearts. Nothing can be hid from Him, His very eye-lids try the Children of Men *Psal. 11: 4.* Wherefore, when we are at a *non-plus*, and know not what to do, this may comfort us, and compose our Spirits, our King knoweth very well, how to carry on his own Contrivances, & glorious Projects : So that when we are blinde, we are to look to Him, who knoweth what to do, when we know not what to do ; and let Him alone with His own work.

9. It is

9. It is sad, when the Children of God are wronged, and cannot get faire Justice: wickedness is to be seen in the place of judgment, and iniquity in the place of righteousness *Eccles. 3: v. 16.* judgment is turned away backward, and Justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; yea truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey *Esai. 59: v. 14, 15.* But here is comfort against this, that Zions King reigneth, who is just, and a King that reigneth in righteousness. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his eares, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth ——— and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loines, and faithfulness the girdle of His reines *Esai. 11: 3, 4, 5.* His people then need not fear, seeing there is Justice to be had at His bar.

10. The Children of God are much fainted and discouraged, when second meanes are out of sight, they see not horses, nor horsemen, to appear in the fields for them; but a right sight of this Truth would prove helpful and encouraging in this case: Did they but by faith see, that
 Zions

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 239

Zions King were reigning on His Throne, and actually swaying His Scepter, they would easily conclude, that all would be well; for this King would either work without meanes (as sometime He doth) or creat meanes for His own use: A wight man (we say) never wanted weapons; and shall our King be straitned for want of meanes? Could *Sampson*, without either Sword or Spear, only with what came next to his hand, the Jaw-bone of an asse, slay so many? And need we fear, that our King shall want Instruments, when He mindeth to work by Instruments? Omnipotency cannot want hands: Any of all the Creatures is sufficient in His hand; with vermine He made an end of proud *Herod*. If He but speak the word, He will therewith command deliverance: So that we need not fear, though the fig tree should not blossome, and though we should see nothing but dry bones, and dry bones scattered about the graves mouth, so long as this King liveth and reigneth, unto whom belong the shields of the Earth, *Psf. 47: v. last.*

¶ I. The Lords reigning in Zion may assure us, that there are great and rich off-fallings to be had. Courtiers fear not want,
so

So long as the King possesseth His Throne, yea they dar adventure to take on Luck's head (as we say) and why may not the Lords people also rejoyce on Lucks head, seing their King shall never be dethroned? It is said *Esaï. 32: vers. 1.* that *a King shall reigne in righteousness.* And what is to follow thereupon? See *vers. 2, 3.* *And a man shall be as an hiding place from the winde, and a covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of water, in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the eares of them that hear shall hearken.*

12. This Consideration may fill the souls of his People with Joy and Consolation, however matters go with them, were they never so low, were Enemies never so high, were the case of the people of God never so desperat like: That Zions King liveth and reigneth, is the most encouraging newes, that can be, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoyce, and let the multitude of the Isles be glade thereat Psal. 97: 1.* There is Joy and gladness here sown for all the upright in heart. Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her? Said *Jeremie Chap. 8: 19.* It is a shame, that Believers should any way carry themselves
 19,

The time of affliction is short. 241

so as On-lookers might have ground to think, that Zions King were not in her, or that they themselves did not beleieve, that Zions King indeed were reigning.

CONSIDERATION XVIII.

The time of Affliction is but short.

IT is an ordinary thing for people, under Affliction, to be putting more hours in their day, than twentie foure; to be multiplying their yeers, and accounting their moneths Yeers, their weeks Moneths, and their houres Dayes; and to be crying out, Oh will this life never have an end? How long, how long, will this Cup be holden to my head? When shall the day dawn, when God shall loose this Yoke from off my neck? *The Harvest is past, and the Summer is ended, and we are not saved, Jer. 8: vers. 20.* Will not this year put an end to our trouble? How long shall the rod of the wicked rest upon the lot of the righteous?

L

How

How long will God lengthen-out this sad trial? These speeches, and the like, are but too frequent in their mouth; and their thoughts are too oft upon this Subject: and thus eternizing their sad lot, in their mindes, or foolishly imagining, it will not have an end, in hast, they multiply their own Sorrow; whereas did they calculat by the Scripture-account, they would see the time shorter, than they now imagine it to be. Now to help them, as to his, We shall 1. Shew what is the Scripture account of the time of Affliction. 2. Answer what can be objected to the contrary. 3. Show how this Consideration may and should be improv'd to advantage.

As to the *First*, The Scriptures give us this account of the matter.

1. That it will *not be for ever* 1 King. 11. v. 39. *And I will for this afflict the Seed of David, but not for ever.* Though for their iniquities He resolv'd to punish and afflict the Seed of David; yet it will not be for ever: And what is here spoken of David's Seed, will, in some respect, agree to the Church and People of God, in all ages. Ay, and there may be here a *Meiosis*,
a Fi-

The time of Affliction is short. 243

a Figure, whereby much more is imported, than the words signifie; and this *not for ever*, is as much as, *for a short time*. It must then be the language of unbeleef to say, that God will cast off for ever, and that *He* will be favourable no more; for His strokes upon the Godly are not of that nature: He may afflict for a time, but not for ever.

2. The Scripture telleth us, that *these dayes will be shortened*, Matth. 20:22. *And except those dayes should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the Elects sake, those dayes shall be shortened.* Christ is speaking there of sore and sharp Tribulation, that was to come upon the Land; and for the comfort of the Elect, He saith, that those dayes of Affliction and Tribulation should not long continue, but should be shortened for their sake: And this will hold good, in all Ages, the Lord being as careful of His Elect now, as then, and His Elect being as ready to fainte, through long Affliction now, as formerly: Therefore the ground of this promise continuing, we must not say, that the promise it self is out of date: To say then, that Affliction shall never have an end, is

upon the matter , to annul this Promise.

3. We finde the Scripture saying, That Affliction, or the rod of the wicked, should not rest upon the Lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity, *Psal. 125: v. 3.* This promise containeth likewise, in the bosome of it, a ground of assurance, that it is not expired; for as long, as the righteous are in hazard of putting forth their hands unto iniquity, because of the continuance of the trouble; we may eye this promise, that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon their lot; & this ground will alwayes endure; and so the promise, bearing this Ground and Reason in its bosome, will continue likewise in force. We must not then say, that Afflictions on the Godly shall never have an end, unless we would withall destroy this promise. Therefore we may conclude, that the People of the Lord shall not be the rest of the burden of the Word of the Lord; as it is said of *Damascus Zech. 9:4.*

4. We are also told in Scripture, That the Heaviness of Affliction is but for a Season, *1 Pet. 1: 6. wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a Season (if need be) ye are in heaviness,*
through

The time of Affliction is short. 245

through manifold temptations. The word rendered *for a Season*, in the original, signifieth *a little present now*; to show that this Season is but short; a present now, without any considerable duration. If this were beleev'd, we could not be crying-out, as we are too ready to do, Oh, will those dayes never be at an end? we would see that the little inconsiderable present now, or point of time, would quickly be over. See *Revel. 6: 11.*

5. The Scripture tels us of *a little while*, *Heb. 10: 37. for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come &c.* The expression is most emphatick in the Original, & cannot well be rendered to the full; as if he had said, *yet a little, how little, how little?* As if it could not be expressed, how little the time was to be. This little while, or appointed time (as it is called *Habb. 2: 3*) will soon be over.

6. The Scripture pointeth it out to be a *very little while* *Esai. 10: 25. for yet a very little while, and the Indignation shall cease &c.* In the Original there are two words, both of them signifying a little time, or a very little time; and so it is as much as if he had said. *a very little little time.* Sure that time cannot be long, which is so short, that the short-

ness of it cannot be expressed. Is it not then strange, that when the Spirit of the Lord cannot (to speak so) get words to express the shortness of the duration of their trouble, they on the contrary cannot get words sufficiently to express their sense of the length of the time?

7. We finde it called by a definite number *Ten dayes*, *Revel. 2: 10.* ——— *And ye shall have tribulation ten dayes*; Whereby the shortness of the duration of that tribulation is expressed; not that the trouble was to continue just ten dayes; but to signifie that it was not to continue long, but a short inconsiderable time, which the Lord had determined and limited punctually to a day. Tribulation will not last alwayes, Ten dayes will put a period to it.

8. If this be too long, we have it expressed as yet much shorter; even *a night*, which is no long time *Psal. 30: 5.* ——— *Weeping may endure for a night*, &c. The dark disconsolat weeping time will not endure long, the few houres of a night will put an end to it: It is but a night, and a night, that hath the dawning of a day following it. We should be ashamed then, to think, or say, that our Trouble and Affliction will alwayes last; we never saw a
night

The time of Affliction is short. 247

night yet, but it had a morning of a new day following it.

9. If this should yet seem too long, we have it denominated from a shorter time, as an *hour* *Revel. 3: 10.* there is mention made of an *hour of temptation, that was to come on all the earth.* Our Lord; sure, would hereby confute our errour of construing the time to be too long, when He doth of purpose mention such short measures of time. An hour will soon be at an end, the few minuts thereof will swiftly pass away.

10. Nay, if this should seem too long, we have it expressed by a shorter duration viz. of a *moment*, *Ps. 30: 5. for his anger endureth but a moment.* And what can be shorter, than a moment? Is there any measure of time shorter, than a moment? And yet by this is the duration of the Anger of God against His Children, in afflicting of them, expressed. Why then should we account that an age, which the Lord calleth but a moment? So *Esa. 54: 8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment.* The word rendered *moment* signifieth cutting or dividing, and so importeth the shortest cutting or division of time. The Apostle speaketh thus of it also

L. 4. 2-Cor. 4:

2 Cor. 4: 17. *Our light Affliction, which is but for a moment.* The Apostles expression is singular, there is a lightness of Affliction, and that lightness is but a momentary lightness; Now weightiness or lightness is not measured by time; yet the Apostle, in a most emphatick manner doth so here, to shew us, that all the weight of the Affliction (in comparison of the glory, that is coming) is meer lightness; or is so light, that it cannot be measured with the least of weights; and therefore he saith, it is but a momentary thing, like a feather falling on a mans hand and immediatly blown away againe. It can be nothing then, but shameless unbelief, that saith the time is long.

II. Nay, which is yet more; as if this duration were yet too long, it is expressed by a *little moment* Esai. 26: vers. 20. As if it were a little part of the least division of time, if there be any moment less then another, that is the right name of the duration of the Troubles and Afflictions of His People. So Esai. 54 vers. 7. It is called a *small moment*. And can we imagine how it can be less? If the People of God had the measuring of the time of their trouble, in their own hand, could they give it any shorter duration, than this? Could they ima-

The time of Affliction is short. 249

imagine a shorter? When the Spirit of the Lord expresseth it thus, We should be ashamed to think it too long.

But it will be objected (and this is the *Second* thing I am to speak to) That the Lords ordinary dispensation with His people in all ages seemeth to contradict this, for ordinarily, if not alwayes, we see, that the Afflictions of His People are of long continuance: did not Israel wander Forty Yeers in the Wilderness? After they came into Canaan, did they not serve the King of *Mesopotamia* Eight yeers *Judg. 3: 8.* and the King of *Moab* Eighteen *vers. 14.* and the King of *Canaan* Twenty Yeers *Judg. 4: 3.* & the King of *Midian* Seven Yeers *Judg. 6: vers. 1*? Were they not captives in *Babylon* Seventy Yeers? not to mention their being now Non-churched above sixteen hundredth Yeers? How then can this time be called and accounted so short?

For clearing of this; we shall propose these few things following to Consideration,

1. The time of the Affliction of His people may be accounted short, in regard of the great and manifold effects, which God is to bring about by the same, a through Consideration of which would make us say, (if we judged according to our usual man-

ner) that the Afflictions must of necessity continue a long time , to the end those great and noble effects may be produced thereby. Would we consider, how much Dross and Corruption in His own people remaineth to be purged away, as Pride, Carnality, Inordinat Self-love, and Love of Pleasures, Riches, Honours , Ease &c. Carnal-Security, Passion, Self-conceite, Formality, Hypocrisie &c. we would see a necessity for the Crosses lying-on for a long time, in order to the purging of these away; As also would we consider how much Hypocrisie, Hollow-heartedness there is to discover; how many false Friends to Christ and His Interest , there are to be made known , we could not but think , that of necessity , in order to the effectuating of this discovery, a long time of trouble and trials were requisite. As likewise, if we called to minde , how many things His people are to learne thereby. Considering I say , those and such like noble Effects, which the great Master of Work is to effectuate and produce by the Affliction ; And how they would seem to call for the continuance of the same for a considerable time . And withall how notwithstanding the Lord prevents the thoughts of many , and maketh a short work ; and doth that in a few Moneths.

The time of Affliction is short. 251

Moneths or Dayes ; which we could have thought should have called for many Yeers. *When* then the Lord maketh such a quick dispatch of such a great Business , we may well say , that the time is short , and that many Years are but a very short time.

2 The time of Afflictions may be accounted short , considering what our Sins and Provocations call for at His hand. *When* in righteousness the Lord might keep us under the rod all our dayes , and multiply Afflictions upon us , to our very dying day ; Ten or Twenty Years Captivity should seem a very short time , a few Years Imprisonment would seem nothing to a man , who had been condemned to perpetual Imprisonment : To another possibly , who got no such Sentence , a few Moneths Imprisonment would seem longer , than many Years to him , because he expected no less , than perpetual Imprisonment. So , were we considering , that in regard of our deservings , the time of Afflictions might justly be continued to the end of our dayes , a few Years or Moneths would appear to be no considerable time. *Wherefore* in respect of our deservings , a long time of Affliction is but a short time ; because the longest is nothing to what we have deserved.

L 6 3. They

3. They may be accounted short, in respect of the dayes of Prosperity, which they have had sometimes in the world. The Lord doth not alwayes chide, He will not cast off for ever; but though he cause griefe, yet will He have compassion, according to the multitude of His tender Mercies *Lam. 3: vers. 32.* and so He sendeth Prosperity, which lasteth longer, than their Adversitie did; as we see *Judg. 3: vers. 11.* after Eight Years bondage, they had rest Fourtie Years: And *vers. 30.* after Eighteen Years trouble, they had rest Fourscore Years. So *Chap. 5: vers. last.* after twenty Years bondage, they had rest Fourty Years. Thus the Lord sometimes sendeth such a length of Prosperity, that the dayes of Adversity are forgotten, as if they had been few and inconsiderable.

4. The time of Affliction may be accounted short, considering how that oftentimes, for as long as the delivery seemeth to be a coming, yet, when it cometh, His People are surprized therewith, their expectation is prevented; they imagined, in their own apprehensions, a longer duration of the trouble, so that mercy preventeth them, when it cometh; and this maketh the by-past time of their Affliction seem short, Though the People of God had been a considerable

The time of Affliction is short. '253

derable time in bondage, and under the feet of Adversaries; yet it appeared unto them, but (as it were) as the time betwixt seed time and harvest *Psal. 126: vers. 5. 6.* after God had wonderfully delivered them out of Captivity and Bondage, they draw this Conclusion from this rare Act of Gods Providence about them. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy, and he that goeth forth and weepeth having precious seed, shall doubtless come againe with rejoyceing, bringing His sheaves wub him.* Whereby is imported that Gods People, abiding by the Lord, though they should meet with Affliction, in their Duty, and be made to weep sore, be reason thereof; yet the time of delivery should come, like an Harvest with fruit, recompensing all their toile and tears: and so, they summed up all their Seventy Years into less than Seven Moneths. And how came it to passe, that the time seemed so short? That *Psalm* pointeth this forth, as one Reason hereof, *Vers. 1: When the Lord turned againe the Captivity of Zion, we were like men that dream.* They were surprized with the mercy, for they did not look for it; but thought their exiled Condition should have continued longer, because they saw no appearance or probability of a returne. So that in regard of what the People of God themselves

may imagine, the time of the Affliction may be short.

5. It may likewise be accounted short and inconsiderable, in regard of the wonderful and extraordinary goodness of God, that appeareth in the delivery; when it cometh, it may be attended with such signal and notable Mercies, which so fill their souls with amazement and satisfaction, that the length of the time of their Affliction disappareth and evanisheth; and, as if it had been nothing, it is presently forgotten. So in that forecited *Psal. 126: vers. 2.* The delivery is accounted signal and wonderfully remarkable, such as *filled their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing.* It was such a notable delivery, accompanied with so many rare Passages, and carrying in the bosome of it so many rare demonstrations of Gods Power, Tenderneſs, Faithfulness, Constancy and loving Kindness, that they could not but be filled with admiration thereat, and have their tongues loosed to sing his praises: Yea they took notice of this circumstance, which increased the admirableness of the delivery, that even Strangers and Heathens were made to say, that God had done great things for the poor Jewes; and they themselves, being no less convinced hereof, could not but subscribe

The time of Affliction is short. 255

to the truth thereof, and (as it were) take the word out of their mouth, and say v. 3. *The Lord had done great things for us, whereof we are glad.* Now this being so remarkable a delivery, the first sight and apprehension of it did so fill their soul with Joy and Admiration, that the long Seventy Years Bondage seemed to them, but as the paines and labour of a few Moneths, in expectation of a good harvest, after the seed was sown: as the long paines of a women travelling in Child-birth are forgotten, when she hath brought forth a Man-Child. In respect therefore of the delivery, so signal as to its Ingredients, Attendants and Circumstances, the time of Affliction may appear as nothing.

6. This time of Affliction may appear to be short, in respect of the Comfort and Support which the Lord may bestow upon them in the Affliction: His Presence and Company may so sweeten the Lot, that the time may (as it were) steal away, and scarce be observed: what is a whole Years Affliction, when God is pleased to shine in love upon the soul during that time? Good Company will make the Journey seem short, and the way good, which otherwayes would be tedious. Now the Lord is pleased sometimes so to manifest Himself.

self, as to fill His People with Joy, and this so sweeteneth the trouble, and cutteth the time short, that many Years seem but a few dayes.

7. The time may be accounted short, in respect of the rich recompence of reward, that is coming. If we should lay this in the ballance with an hundred Years Bondage and Affliction, what would all these Years of trouble seem to be, but as the trouble of a moment, when it is past? Therefore, when *Paul* taketh a view of the exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, which was coming, all the Afflictions in this earth appeared as nothing in his eyes: the transcendent Glory & incomprehensible Excellency of the one, eateth away the duration of the other to a thing of nothing 2 Cor. 4: ver. 17. It is with the Beleever, in this case, as it was with *Jaacob*, when he was serving for *Rachel*, Seven Years enduring of the cold frost by night, and the heat by day, seemed unto him but as a few dayes, For the love he had to her Gen. 29: vers. 20. The thoughts of the rich and upmaking reward, that faithful Sufferers have to look-for, will cause a long time of sad Affliction seem short.

8. The time of Affliction is so short, that it is as nothing, in comparison of Eternity:

The time of Affliction is short. 257

the exceeding and eternal weight of Glory will make the Afflictions light & momentany. What is the whole of time unto Eternity? Is there any comparison betwixt what is finite, & what is Infinite? Being then the whole of time is not as a moment of time to all eternity; what can the longest duration of Affliction be, but as an inconsiderable part of that inconsiderable whole? VVhat do those, who are up before the Throne, think of the many Years of their Trouble and Persecution here below? Are they, think we, calculating it by Years or by Dayes, or by Houres? Oh no, all of it is, with them, comprized within the Circle of a small inconsiderable point.

These and the like particulars being duely pondered and considered, it will appear, how the longest time of Affliction, that we can have here, is but short & inconsiderable: And it is our not weighing and laying of these things to heart, which maketh our trouble seem so long.

Thirdly, VVe come now to speak of the Christian and Edifying Improvement of this Consideration: which is by fixing it in our heart, as a sure truth, that the time of Affliction is indeed but short. And had we the faith hereof rooted in our souls, we would be in case to carry Christianly under Afflictions

Afflictions : For the faith hereof would produce several sweet and useful Effects , in our hearts , seasonable and profitable for such a time : Such as these following.

2. The fixed apprehension of this , that the time of trouble is but short , would fortifie the Soul of a Beleever against the false suggestions of the Devil , which he maketh much use of at that time , to disquiet their hearts , and make their lives bitter. He will labour to perswade them , that God looketh on them as Enemies , otherwise He would not continue their heavy Affliction so long ; and thus tempt them to question their Interest in God. But the faith of this truth would enable the Beleever to answer this Objection , and to repel this Temptation , by saying , *His anger is but for a moment* , His face will not alwayes be hid ; this blast will go over ; and therefore I have no cause to call my Interest in question , upon this account.

2. The fixed faith of this would keep the Beleever from questioning the promises , upon the account , that the Lords Dispensations did seem to threaten a long lasting trouble ; and a sad life of Affliction for a long time. Temptation , it is true , will then say , God hath forgotten to be gracious , He will be favourable no more , His faithfulness

The time of Affliction is short. 259

fulness faileth for ever. But the Soul, believing this Conclusion, will say, what a poor insignificant ground is that for me, whereupon to call the faithfulness of God in question? If the trouble were lengthened out yet longer, all the time is but short, it will soon have an end.

3. The faith of this will contribute much to hold up *Hop's* Head. When the afflicted Person, through the Power of Temptation, is made to cry-out, O! This Trouble will never have an end, this perplexity and exercise is but growing; and what shall I do? Then hope beginneth to fail, and when hop faileth, the soul sincketh: But now, when this Consideration is seriously thought upon, and the soul is made to say, all the time of Affliction, which his Children meet with here, is but short, it will not alwayes last, it is but for a moment, yea and for a very short moment; then hop is made to lift up its head; for the man will be ashamed to quite his hop, and despond, who knoweth that the storme will quickly be over, and be but like a may-shoure.

4. The Faith of this will help unto the exercise of *Patience*: when we look upon the trouble, as that which will not end, or must be of long continuance, our courage departeth, our spirits fail, and we storme and
grow

grow Impatient. But when we by faith look thorow the thick and black side of the dispensation, and see the end of the calamity nigh at hand, the moment posting away, how sweetly will we lay our necks under the yoke, and set our faces against the storme, and hold on our Journey? How patiently will we bear the Indignation of the Lord, when we know, that it will be over within a moment? We will be ashamed to quarrel, or complaine, when we know, that a period shall quickly be put thereunto. The Apostle told the *Hebreines* Heb. 10: 36. that they *had need of patience*: And to encourage them unto Patience, he tels them, that within a little while, yea a very little while. He that should come, would come, and would not tarry *vers.* 37.

5 The faith of this will help unto *Constancy* and *Stedfastness*. When we once conceive and apprehend, that our trouble shall be of long endurance, we grow weak, and unable to stand out against temptations; and are ready to say, because this storme will not soon blow over, it is best to row to a lee shore, and comply with the sinful courses of the time: Whereas did we see and beleve, that the storme would not endure long, but be quickly gone, we would be encouraged to ride it out, and enabled
to

The time of Affliction is short. 261

to withstand temptations unto a slideing with the workers of Iniquity.

6. It would help also unto Christian *cheerfulness* under the Crosse; when we know that it will be but a blast, soon over and gone, our Countenance will not fall, nor our courage fail: but when we represent the trouble to ourselves, as of long continuance, and we beginne to doubt if ever it shall have an end, then we become discouraged, and our countenances are cast down, and we appear no more couragious and cheerful: How do our hearts faint, and our hands fail us? The Consideration of the short and momentany Affliction kepted-up *Pauls* hearr, and made him say, *For this cause we fainte not* 2 Cor. 4: 16, 17.

7. The faith of this would free us from many feares, that ordinarily attend such a Condition; we are, while under Affliction, saying, what if this or that fall out? But the faith of this would hush these troublesome feares and questions to the door. The Tribulation being but to continue ten dayes, we would fear none of these things *Revelat. 2: v. 10.*

CONSIDERATION. XIX.

Remember *Peter's* fall *Mat.*

26. vers 33, 34, 35.

IN a time of trials and temptations, as it is of advantage to be calling to minde, and presenting to ourselves the Christian, and commendable Carriage of such, as have been helped of the Lord, to witness a good Confession for Him, and for His Cause and Interest, before men; to the end we may thereby be encouraged to follow their example, and to adventure on the Promises with them, and not to fear the faces of men, in Christ's Cause; so it may be of use for us also, to present before our eyes, and to take notice of the faintings of others, in the day of Trial, that thereby we may learn, to walk in fear, and not to trust to ourselves, or to any thing within us; and to watch, lest we enter into temptation, when we are not in case to wrestle against it.

We have here before us a sad and an alarming Instance viz. the foule fall of an Eminent man, in the houre of Temptation, which

which may be Improved to advantage.

After Christ and His Disciples had been supping together, at that Instituted Feast, He tels them some sad and wakening newes *vers.* 31, 32. to Teach us (1.) That we are never more ready to grow secure, and to think that our mountain stands so strong, that it shall never be moved. than when we have had greatest Enjoyments of and Communications from the Lord, and nighest Access unto him. (2.) That there is never less cause of security, than at that time; for the higher we have come in our attainments, the Devil is the nigher with his storme. (3) That we should never be secure; but even, when we win neereſt God, we should resolve upon and prepare for new assaults, and temptations. But withal it is remarkable, that the Lord delayed the signification of the sad things, that were to fall out, until the feast was ended, and they had sung a hymne; knowing that they would then be best in case to bear the sad report; and not loving to marre their mirth, at that feast of love.

Though Christ had told them, that they should all be offended because of him, that night; yet *Peter*, out of a piece of manly courage (as would appear) promising too much upon his own head, would not believe;

leeve; but would rather make his Master a false Prophet, than suspect his own weakness: Therefore Christ tels him, that he should be more offended, than any of the rest; and that he should deny Him thrice, ere the next morning came *vers. 34*. But all this would not lay the high conceite, that Peter had of himself; for he resolved rather to die, than do that; and this he avowed openly, little knowing this own strength.

In this carriage, and in these Answers of Peter, there are some things good, and some things bad; and the noticing of both may be of use to us. As for such things, as are good here, and may yeeld us some Instruction, we shall mention these three.

First, It was good, that Peter was convinced, & did acknowledge, that it was his duty, and the duty of all Christ's Disciples, to avow their Master, and not to be offended in Him, whatever came. And this is an undeniable truth, That upon all hazards, Christ should be owned and avowed by all, that would not have Him to be ashamed of them one day? And yet how little is this beleev'd & beleevingly practis'd?

Secondly, It was good, that he was convinced, and that he confessed, that it was his duty, though all the rest should have left

left alone, yet notwithstanding to owne and avow his Master, and not deny him: For Christ and His truth and cause is worthy to be owned and avowed, how small so ever our encouragment from others be: And as we should not follow a multitude to do evil; so neither will the defection of many justifie our defection, and lessen our fault, if we depart from the faith.

Thirdly, It was good, that he saw, and acknowledged, that he was obliged to owne his Master, and stand at his back, be the hazard never so great; and that the very fear of death, should not cause him deny his Master. *Thou b* (saith he) *I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* And indeed all, that would be faithful Disciples to Christ, must not think their life dear to the death for Him; but must be dead to life and all that is dear to them.

But that which we would chiefly here take notice of is, that which was amisse in him; and which will ground some sad Truths for our use; As

First, He had too great a conceite of himself; and thought too much of what he had, & of what he was. Hence *obs.* That Christians are too ready to be puffed up with thoughts of themselves; and are in hazard

M

to

to be carryed away with this evil of self conceite, and vaine thoughts of their owne worth and excellency. And this ariseth from these evils.

1. Unmortified Corruption, This is alwayes working against God, one way or other; and is as ready to work this way, as any other way.

2. Little self searching, and self examination, whereby we become strangers to the evil of our hearts, and know not what enemies are lurking there, and what wickedness aboundeth; and when we know not what is within, it is little wonder we be readily puffed up with swelling thoughts of vanity.

3. Little real acquaintance with the treachery, deceitfulness and double dealing of our false hearts: If we saw that, and saw its activity for evil, we would see more cause of humiliation, than of pride and self conceite.

4. Little mindeing & considering aright the failings and falls of others, who seemed to be as fast at the root, as we: If we thought upon this, we might have cause to feare, that we should also not be able to ride out a storme.

5. Trusting too much unto our own present

present good disposition and frame, as if this would alwayes continue with us, and we needed to feare no change.

6. Trusting too much to our Resolutions, Purposes and earnest Engagements, considering little the treachery and deceitfulness of the heart, nor remembering our own Changeableness and Unconstancy, and that our good fits may be soon off us.

7. Little considering how we must depend on the Lord & His Influencing grace, for through-bearing in all our duties; and how we can do nothing without Him, and His supplies of grace and strength.

This should be a warning to us to guard against this evil of pride and self conceite: and to study more humility of minde; knowing better what we are, and where our strength lyeth, that we may promise less upon our own head, and undertake nothing in our own strength. And it should teach us to mourne over this body of death, and to guard against its risings & motions, and to strive against it, in all its appearances and actings.

Secondly, The foretold defection and fainting of all the rest of the Disciples maketh not him the more afraied; but for all

that he keepeth fast his high and presumptuous thoughts of himself. Which tels us, that there is such an evil among good Persons, as not to suspect themselves, and fear their fall, notwithstanding of the supposed and foreseen fals and failings of others. And this floweth from the same evil root of pride, and self confidence. We remember not that the same evil heart of Unbeliefe, Unconstancy, Treachery and Backsliding, that is in others, remaineth in us.

Whence we should learne to bewar of this evil, and to know our hearts better, and suspect the evil of them more. Let us not *think of ourselves more highly than we ought* Rom 12: 3 but *Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall* 1 Cor. 10: 12. And let the examples of others put us to watchfulness & fear, lest we fall after the same example of unbeliefe. Heb 4: 11.

Thirdly, He would not fear, though Christ told him, and that with a doubled asseveration, *verily, Verily* that himself in particular, as well as the rest, should deny him. Whence we see, how hard it is to lie open to Convictions of our own weakness, & readiness to decline in an evil day. And this floweth from the same evils of Pride, Self.

Self-confidence, & Ignorance of our hearts and wayes.

This should reach us to observe and notice the strength and activity of this piece of Corruption, which yet remaineth in the best: And to hate and strive against this evil and proud humore: As also to be jealous of ourselves, and to lye open to Convictions from the Word, and be ready to take warnings, and to tremble before the Lord, and at his Word.

Beside these things that were good, and that were bad in *Peter*. We may consider this Prediction of Christ's, and the intertainment that *Peter* gave it, whereof we have heard, with the event, and other circumstances here recorded, and thence finde some matter of Instruction.

I. Then, we may *observe*. That a Person may be convinced of his duty to stand by Christ and his Cause and Interest, in a day of trial, and yet deny Him, when it cometh to the point of tryal. *Peter's* Conviction of his duty to owne Christ, come what could come, did not keep him from a foule fall, in the hour of temptation: And the reason is manifest, for (I.) Convictions may evanish, or lose their force & edge: Light may grow dark, truths become question-

ed; or (2.) suppose Convictions should remaine in their force; yet it is only fresh supplies of Influences of grace, & strength, that will cause the man stand, without which he may be carried over the belly of Light, Conscience and all Convinctions, in a day of temptation..

Hence we see Light and Convictions are not enough to keep us stedfast, in a day of tryal; we must look-out for something more, and not lean to that which will not carry us thorow, more than it did *Peter*.

2. A Person may be thoroughly convinced, that he should stand by Christ and his Cause and Interest, though the defection were never so great, yea though he should be left in that quarrel alone; and yet deny Christ and his Truth, in a day of tryal: *Peter* was convinced, that he should not deny Christ, though all others should do it; and yet fell foully. And the grounds of this are the same, with the grounds of the former truth: Deep Convictions are one gift, and stability in a day of tryal is a distinct gift. Light is one thing, but grace to follow that light, is another thing.

Wherefore the deeper our Convictions be, we ought the rather to feare the more,
and

and depend the more by faith on Christ for actual Assistance, Influence and Grace to follow Convictions, and abide by Duty, in the day of tryal.

3. Clear, Plaine, Peremptour and Particular Warnings, will not be enough to keep us stedfast in an evil day: *Peter* had such here, and yet he fell in the day of temptation: And the reason is because (1.) These warnings may weare away, and be forgotten, And (2.) Pride and Corruption may so puff up, that all these shall not once pick upon the man: And so he may forget himself, and take litle notice of them

The consideration of which should reach us to be Jealous of our heart, to keep humble, and feare alwayes; and to improve warnings, to a stirring of ourselves up to Diligence, Watchfulness, Acting of faith upon Christ, and Living nigh to Him.

4. A present good frame and disposition, or a fit of warmth and affection to Christ, will not be enough to secure us from a fall, in the day of tryal. As we see here in *Peter*; He seemed to be in a very good frame, at present, and full of affection, when he would rather die than deny his Master; & yet when the temptation came, he yeelded. The reasons are (1.) Such frames and

fits do not usually stay, nor leave any deep impression on the heart. (2.) Grace actuated, & blown upon one way, will not be sufficient to make grace lively another way, or for other work; but the habite must have new Influences for every new work: For (3.) without Christ we can do nothing: All our strength is in Him; in Him we must move, as well as live; and He must work in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

This should learne us, not to think much of any present fit of tenderness, or flash of affection; for that may soon wear off; nor think that that will be sufficient to carry us thorow new straits and difficulties. It were better to be learning & practising the way of faith, and of dependance upon Christ, that we may be strong in Him, and in the power of His might *Ephes. 6: 10*. That we may live in Him, and bring forth fruit in Him. Diffidence of our selves, and of any thing we have, even when we are at the best, would be more suitable and useful for us, than building too much upon such slender and slippery grounds: And the consciousness of our own Unconstancy, and Instability should make us live closer to Christ.

5. Strong Purposes and Resolutions to stand fast, in a day of tryal, will not keep

us from reeling and staggering in a stormy day : *Peter* had brave Purposes and stout Resolutions; yet he fell notwithstanding, in the hour of temptation. And the reason is because: (1.) These Purposes and Resolutions are oft ill founded with us; we ground them too oft upon something within ourselves, on our *Partes* and Abilities, our Light and Knowledge, and upon our Grace and Receivings from God, or upon former thorow-bearings, and the like; which may prove but a sandy foundation. (2.) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and so may faile us, in a day of strait and difficulty. (3.) These purposes may soon be forgotten and laid by.

Which should learne us, not to deceive ourselves with those specious and promising flourishings of Purposes and Resolutions, even when they are real, and without the reproachings of our heart; for these are not strong enough to carry us thorow a sad storme, that may come.

6. A Person may resolve on death, in avowing Christ, and yet not stand out against a smaller temptation: *Peter* resolved to die, rather than deny his Master, and yet the word of a Damsel made him deny Christ. And that because (1.) Presupposed hazard

is not so terrible to nature , as what is present; a small trouble present is more frightful to nature than a greater trouble afar off, (2.) We oft make our Resolutions without Christ , and resolve not in Him , but in ourselves. (3.) Oftentimes these Resolutions are not deliberat , but done in a fit of a good mood and warm frame; and when that is off , the Resolutions animated thereby wax cold and faint.

The Consideration of which should make us feare alwayes, and not to trust the highest and strongest of Resolutions: Happy such as abide in Christ, and depend upon Him, for their daily Food, Strength, Courage and Activity; and undertake nothing without Him.

7. All these fast and firm-like Purposes, Vowes and Resolutions will be so far from keeping a person from a fall , in a day of temptation , that they will not, some time, keep him even for a few houres. So was it here with *Peter* ; for that very night he denied his Master. And that because (1.) A Christian , when left to himself is not able to stand - out a storme , even a very little time. (2.) Their adversary the Devil is active, subtile, and vigilant. (3.) After Vowes and fast Purposes they become secure , as thinking their hazard less, and trusting,

trusting to their owne strength; and so the Devil gets most advantage, when they are gone from their watch-towr, and are fallen asleep in their security. (4.) The Lord may see it good to suffer this, to punish them for their Pride and Self-Confidence, and to let all see, that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord.

This may let us see, What an Unconstant Creature a beleever is, when he is left to himself, and how inconsistent he is with himself. And should teach us to fear most, and be most upon our guard, when we think ourselves best and safest. And to know, that our Strength and standing is in the Lord.

8. When Persons think themselves most sure, they may be nearest to a fearful fall: *Peter* thought now his mountaine stood so strong, that he should never be moved, as *David* did *Psal.* 30. And all the warnings he got did not make him once fear a fall: And yet we know, what a fearful fall followed upon this. And the reason is, because (1.) They oft judge by sense and carnal reason; and so think because they finde themselves, in a good mood at present, that all is well, and they need to fear nothing: (2.) They grow then most secure, and self-confident, and therefore neglect their

M 6 watch.

watchful, and circumspect walking, and are not in the fear of the Lord all the day long. (3.) Satan observing this watcheth his time, and finding them secure setteth on, & cannot but prevaile. (4.) Self-confidence blindeth the eyes, that they see not their owne weakness, and where Satan may have advantage against them. (5.) The only Wise God ordereth it thus, to let us see, that all Flesh is grasse.

Therefore we should never resolve to quite our Watch-towr, but alwayes minde watchfulness and circumspection, and guard against Security. Let us fear most, when we think we are safest, and beware of promising safety and immunity to ourselves, in whatsoever condition or frame we be into. Let him that standeth take heed, lest he fall.

9. Such as have an higher conceite of themselves, than of others, may come to fall fouler than any. *Peter* thought more of himself, than of all the rest; and that he should stand by his Master, though all the rest should shamefully turn their back upon Him; and yet none among them all did, as he did. And the Lord wisely ordereth matters thus, that (1) All Flesh may lye low in the dust, be humble, tremble
and

and feare. (2.) That the best may be jealous of themselves, and fear a fall. (3.) That He may chastise the pride of some, who thought there were none comparable to them.

Which is a warning to all, to have humble and low thoughts of themselves, and to beware of proud imaginations and loftie thoughts.

10. A Person may have true Grace, and yet sinfully and shamefully shun suffering for Christ. As we see in *Peter*, who had the root of the matter in him: For to beleeve is one gift, and to suffer is another distinct gift, and they go not alwayes together. See *Phil. 1: v. 29.* of which we spoke above.

To teach us to depend upon Him for the one, as well as for the other; and not to think, that if we have grace, we need no more to carrie us honestly thorow a day of temptation. We would remember, that it must be given us in that very houre, to suffer stedfastly, and to stand to the truth.

11. A Child of God may fall into this grievous sin of denying his Lord and Master in all His Interests, in His Person, Offices, Attributes and Works. This

M. 7.

was

was no small sin, in which *Peter* fell, at this time: It had a long tail of direful and sad Consequences. There is no sin, which Beleevers are exempted from, but the unpardonable sin unto death, final impenitency, and final and total Apostasie. And Satan, in all his temptations, driveth at this, to have them denying, quitting and renouncing Christ.

Which should teach us (1.) To have charitie to some, that fall in a day of temptation; seing some, in whom is the root of the matter, may, being left of the Lord, fall very foulely. (2.) To be humble and watchful all our dayes, not knowing what may befall us ere we die: We may ride thorow one, or two, or moe stormes, and yet fall shamfully, ere we go off the stage. (3) To remember what a strong and violent Body of Death we have within us; lest we turn secure and careless. (4.) To be thankful to God, if we be kept stedfast at any time; for that is not of ourselves; the Grace and Power of God have done it. Therefore let God have the Glory, and not we ourselves.

12. When once a Beleever, in a day of temptation, beginneth to fall, and loseth
a foot,

a foot, he may fall very foully, ere he recover himself. *Peter* lost his foot, and spoke an untruth at first, simply denying his Master; but it came to fearful Oaths, Cursings and Execrations, ere all was done. For (1.) The way down-ward is very easie (2.) Satan is at hand, to drive forward; and who can stand, when the Devil driveth down ward? (3.) Conscience being once wounded will be easily made worse: If once a little hole be made in the Conscience, it is easily made wider; for tenderness and watchfulness go away.

Which should serve as a loud warning, to beware of the very beginning of a defection, and to guard against the very first breaking-in of waters. It is not safe to say, such a length I will go, and so far I will yeeld, to save a staik, and to keep my peace; but I will go no further. It were more wisdom, to hold further off the brinke and precipice, lest, if our foot slip, we recover not ourselves so easily againe: And we know not, what a providential Commission the Lord may give Satan, to drive us, by his temptations, forward to that, which we never dreamed of, because of our rash and sinful venturing, and bold
hazarding

hazarding upon sin and known dangers. It is Wisdom to resist the beginnings of evil; then are we strongest, and best able to withstand; whileas, the more we cede and yeeld, the weaker we become, and the weaker we are, we are the more easily driven downward, and carried away of the winde of temptation.

CONSIDERATION XX.

**Gods Way of delivering
his People is hid and
mysterious.**

ESAI. XLV. VERS. 15.

*Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self.
O God of Israel the Saviour.*

BEcause right thoughts of Gods Mysterious wayes of Working, and bringing about Salvation and Deliverance, are useful, in a dark day, we shall speak a little to this.

We finde in Scripture frequent mention made of Gods hiding himself, 1. His Saints are oft complaining of it *Job. 13:*

v. 24.

God's deliverings are oft hid. 281

v. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face?* So *Psal. 10: 1. & 44: 24. & 88: 14.* and they are making it the matter of their lamentation, and laying it forth, as the ground of their sorrow and griefe.

2. We finde this dispensation threatned be cause of sin *Deut. 31: 18. And I will surely hide my face, in that day, for all the evils, which they shall have wrought.*

3. We finde it also accordingly executed because of sin *Ezek. 39: 24. According to their uncleanness, & according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.* So *Eesai. 57: 17. For the iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, I hid me and was wroth.* See also *Eesai. 59: vers 2. & 64: vers 7. & 54: 7, 8.*

4. We finde this dispensation accompanied with sad Effects: Such as

(1.) A not hearing of the praiers of his people *Eesai. 1: 15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you.* Hence these petitions are put up together to God by the *Psalmist Psal. 27: 7, 9. Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice, and hide not thy face far from me.* As upon the other hand, when He heareth the cry of His people, it is an evidence that His face is not hid:

hid: Yea these are looked on as one thing, so firmly are they knit together *Psal. 22: v. 24.* — *Neither hath He hid his face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard.*

(2.) Sad and grievous Afflictions, as *Eesai. 64. 7.* *Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us.*

(3.) Sad and grievous Afflictions continued, together with a not-regairding, or owning of them, in their Afflictions: For so doth the Church complaine *Psal. 44: 24* *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression?*

(4.) Trouble and griefe inward *Psal 30: ver. 7.* — *Thou didest hide thy face, and I was troubled.* So *Psal. 88: v. 14.* *Lord why castest thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me?*

But this is not the hiding, whereof the Prophet in this place *Eesai. 45: 15.* is speaking: For the *hiding* here mentioned is of a far other nature, giving us properly to understand, That the Lord hath an Unseen, Unusual, Hid, Mysteious, Sublime, Excellent, transcendently and incomprehensibly Glorious way of carrying on His Work, of bringing about His holy Purposes, and of making good His
faithful

faithful Promises : The circumstances of the Text do fully make out this to be the true and genuine meaning of the words ; for the whole contexture of what preceedeth and of what followeth , is a masse of gracious Promises of great things , which the Lord was about to do , in the behalfe of His Church and interest ; and the very particular Instrument, King *Cyrus* , by whom the Lord would begin the recovery of the Estate of his Church, is designed ; and his prosperous success , in all his attempts , against what stood in his way , foretold ; Objections, that might arise in his peoples mindes removed ; and they shamed from their Unbeleeving , Querrelling , proud and arrogant Contending humore : Together with remarkable adjuncts , and concomitants of this great change of the Church to the better , in their Neighbours , *Egyptians*, *Ethiopians* and *Sa'rans* ; as also ruine and destruction foretold, to come upon all the Enemies . Now in the midst of these thoughts , the holy Prophet breaketh out into a rapture of Admiration , having in these words , an holy Ejaculation and *Apostrophe*, as ravished with the thoughts of these great incredible-like and wonderful matters , and the

the rare and wonderful manner of bringing about this Change & Outgate, which humane understanding could not comprehend: For as one transported with joy & wonderiug, he cryeth out, in the midst of these Prophecies. *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self O God of Israel, the Saviour.* Wherein we may take notice of these foure things.

1. The frame of the Prophet, and the holy disposition of his soul, held forth by this abrupt Ejaculation.

2. The matter or occasion of this Rapture and Transport, which is twofold; for (1.) He seeth *God hiding himself*; and (2.) in that dark and unseen way, he saw him, the *God of Israel, and the Saviour.*

3. The Manner of Expressing this his admiration, with a *Verily.*

4. His venting himself thus in the bosome of God. *Verily, thou art a God &c.*

As to the *first*, the frame of soul, which was in the Prophet, at this time, we may take notice of these Particulars, which may withal point-out our duty, in a sad day.

1. We see the Prophet fixed in the faith and perswasion of the truth of what the Lord

Gods deliverings are oft hid. 285

Lord was here promiseing, concerning his Church and People: He was confident and fully perswaded, that the deliverance of the people of God out of the *Babylonish* Captivity, in which they were to be, full Seventy yeers, would come; though at this present, while he is getting this discovery and manifestation, there was no appearance of their being brought in bondage, & led away captive out of their own land by the *Babylonians*; far less of their delivery out of that Captivity; the people being now dwelling in their owne Land, & living in peace and quiet, far from any molestation from the *Caldeans*: His faith and perswasion of the truth of what the Lord said to Him, and by Him, was the ground of this his Admiration and Ravishment: For what we do not beleieve to be true, how rare and uncouth so ever it be, it will not ravish us, nor cause in us a rapture of Admiration.

Hence we see all the sayings of God, how improbable and unlikely so ever they may be, should be embraced with fulness of faith; we should with *Abraham* Rom. 4: 18. *Against hope beleieve in hope*; He did not consider his own body now dead, nor the deadness of *Sarahs* womb, nor did he stagger at
the

the promise of God, through unbelief; but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God, and was fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to performe vers. 19, 20, 21. So no more should we take any notice of the humane improbability, and of the many unlikelyhoods, and of such things, as might, to humane reason, walking upon humane grounds, make the thing promised seem altogether improbable, if not impossible: But, having the firme Word of God, who cannot lie, nor change, there to rest, as anchored upon that immovable Rock, and ride-out all stormes of carnal Reasonings, and corrupt Suggestions and Temptations of Satan.

2. We see in the Prophet, that all the consideration, that he might have had, at this time, of the Improbabilities, small Appearances, Difficulties, yea and Incapabilities to humane judgment, standing as mountaines in the way of the charriot of God's Faithfulness & Truth, coming With Salvation to his people, did but contribute to his more firme and fixed gripping of, and cleaving to, the Promises and Predictions; and raise in his soul an holy Ravishment and Rapture of

won-

wondering, at this rare and wonderful Work of God, which he saw by faith. And this should teach us to take notice of the Difficulties, and Improbabilities, that seem to us to lye in the way of the accomplishment of the great Promises, for no other end than this, that we may become more fixed in the faith thereby, and be raised up to see more of the Glorious Power, Truth, Goodness and Faithfulness of God, and helped to get a fuller look of God, as Incomprehensible in all His wayes.

3. We may observe here, in the frame of the Prophet, That he discovered in God something Rare, Admirable, Excellent and Glorious, that ravished him, and transported his soul: He saw a Divine, Holy Myserie, in God's way: When the way of the Lord was, to humane eyes, Unclear, Dark and Cloudy, he saw the Glory of God shining forth, with greater brightness and splendour. He saw the Lord, while covered, as to his way of working, with a thick cloud, by the eye of faith; he pierced the clouds, and saw the Invisible. *Thou art a God*: Nay he, saw, that such a way, whatever the shallow & dim-sighted Reason of Man might
appre-

apprehend, concerning it, was God's way; and had the manifest lineaments of God engraven upon it: he saw that that hid way was God-like; and these thick clouds, that to humane reason would darken the beauty and lustre of God's Glory, did the more set off to him, the Divine Glory and Majesty of God. O what an excellent frame is this; and how useful and necessary for his people, in a day of clouds and darkness? And what a sharp eagles-eye must faith have, that can discover Glory in obscurity; and see a rare and singular sight of God, even when He is hiding himself; and can observe a greater Glory, and splendour of Excellency, in the clouds and darkness, that are about His throne. How great must the difference be betwixt that sight of God, which a Natural eye, measuring things according to the rule of Carnal Reason, can get of the most refulgent and self-manifesting Operations of God; and that discovery of God, which faith getteth, in those dispensations of God, which have no Glory or Majesty in them, unto a Carnal eye? How averse and unwilling should the consideration of this make us, to judge of God and of his Wayes and Doings, by Carnal Reason

Reason? And how blinde a judge must that be of Gods Wayes and Dispensations?

4. We may here take notice, in the Prophets frame, That he discovereth, in the wayes of God, about which now his thoughts are occupied, an unsearchable Depth, a Myſtery, and Incomprehenſibleness: For he is like a man walking into the sea, and findeth it the longer the deeper, and at length is like to drown, and there standeth, and cryeth out, this ocean hath no bottom; I shall lose my selfe if I go further: He hath been, as it were, wading in his contemplations of the Myſtery of God's wayes with and about his Church and People; and as one loseing ground, he cryeth out *Verily thou art a God, that hideſt thy self*: Thy wayes are Incomprehenſible, Unfathomable, and Unsearchable. As the Apostle Paul, in a case not unlike Rom. 11: 33. — *how unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out*? David hath an expression not unlike, in his contemplations of God Psal. 145; 3. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable*?

5. It is observable in the Prophets
N frames;

frame, That as he discovereth in the wayes of God, which were now the matter of his Spiritual Meditation, a singular & rare Beauty, and Divine Excellency, a transcendent Glory; so he saw this, while all these wayes of God were covered with clouds, and darkness. Even when He was hiding himself, and clouds and darkness were round about Him, he saw, that Righteousness and Judgment were the habitation of his throne; as it is *Psal. 97: 2.* Faith can see God in the dark, and discover a God hiding himself: Faith can go - in thorow clouds and coverings and dark dispensations, and see the Glorious God acting in Majesty, and carrying on His work in Faithfulness and Truth, according to His everlasting Purposes, and Faithful Promises. This should be our study, in the day of God's hiding of Himself, as to His visible dispensations, and outward work, in the world.

6. We may here also mark, in the holy Prophets frame, a suitable Submission of spirit, & holy Acquiescence of soul, in this singular and rare way of the Lords bringing-about His Intended Designes; There is no footstep here of the holy mans Murmuring, Repining, Grudging
ing

ing or Quarrelling, at this dark and unseen way of the Lord's ordering His matters; but on the contrary we may observe, the Prophet stouping, & putting his mouth in the dust, sweetly acquiescing in, and submitting to the way, howbeit dark, unusual, and compassed with dark clouds, that infinite wisdom thinketh good to take and follow, in carrying on His Purposes, and Designes of love and mercy, to His people. *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self &c.* I see that now, would he say, that I did not observe before; and I am satisfied: I have nothing to say against it; I close with it, and am fully content it be so. Such a frame would suite us well, let the Lord take what way He will, & follow what method He thinketh good: How uncouth and dark so ever it seemeth to us; yet so far should we be from complaining, or from a quarrelling discontentedness of minde; that we should heartily, cheerfully, and with full satisfaction of soul comply therewith, in heart, mind and affection.

7. It is observable also in the holy Prophets frame, that notwithstanding of all these interveening clouds of Improbabilities & Unlikelihoods, and dark Dispen-

fations, that would seem to cover and hide the comfortable relation, that God standeth in unto his Church and People; as their Covenanted God and Saviour; yet against hope, as to humane appearances, and carnal reasoning, he beleeveth in hope; and holdeth this fast, that be His dispensations what they will, and be the outward and visible appearances of His owning of and appearing for His people, never so small and inconsiderable; yet He was, & would be, *the God of Israel, and the Saviour*. Howbeit the reasonings of flesh and blood would say, God hath forgotten to be gracious, and his Promises fail, and he will be favourable no more, as *Psal. 77: v. 7, 8, 9*. Yet he saw, that His way was in the Sanctuary, and in the sea, and His path in the great waters; and that though His footsteps could not be seen, yet He was leading his people like a flock. *v. 13: 19, 20*. Such actings of faith, in a dark day, would be of great use, & would contribute much to our Establishment; & keep us from staggering, in the day of temptation.

8. We may take notice here, in this manner of expression, of the burning of the holy mans Affections towards God; These thoughts of the Lord's Dispensations,

God's way of delivering is oft hid. 293.

ons, whereby He appeared a God like himself, did not alienate his heart from God, nor drive him further from Him; but on the contrary, they did warm his Affections more, and draw him nigher unto God; for he is uttering these his Apprehensions of God, and of His way, even unto God himself, saying, *Verily, thou art a God &c.* It is good when our Meditations of God, & of His wayes, how uncouth, strange, & unusual so ever they be indeed, or seem to be, work thus upon us, & are accompanied with a powerful attractive vertue, drawing & powerfully inclineing the heart & soul, to approach nigher unto God: And when the Lord is rightly seen, in any of his wayes, how dark soever, this will follow upon it; the heart will be more engaged unto God, & the soul will improve these meditations, to a noble advantage; and have thereby many sweet occasions of heavenly Ejaculations, and of Postings of soul toward God.

9. It is considerable also in the Prophets carriage, while he thus uttereth the whole matter of his thoughts, even in the Presence of God, and poureth forth his soul into the very bosome of God, that he was real, and single hearted, in all this Ex-

cise ; it was not a meer rational discursive Contemplation, but a real exercise of soul ; his heart was really & in very deed affected with the matter , *Verily* (saith he) *thou art a God that hidest thy self &c.* His declaring of the thoughts of his heart unto God , saith , that he was not formal , superficial, or for a fashion exercised in this case ; but was really exercised therewith at the heart ; his soul was in the meditation ; and he looked upon it , as momentous , and weighty , and as a matter of high concernment. A Formal , Superficial , Indifferent , and Cursory Contemplation of the works and wayes of the Lord , should be hateful to us ; and Uprightness , Sincerity and Reality should appear in all our wayes , and especially while musing & meditating upon the rare Passages of God's Providence : Our heart and soul should be in every thought , for the subject is grave and weighty , and of great concernment.

10. *Lastly* , It is obvious enough , that the Prophet here is in a transport of Admiration : he getteth so broad a sight of this Majestick and God-like way of carrying on His work , that he is astonished thereat , and ravished with wondering ;
and

God's way of delivering is hid. 295

and therefore breaketh out, in this holy *Apostrophe* and Ejaculation, verily, *thou art a God, that hidest thy self &c.* Never do we get a right look of God, and of his wayes but when the sight thereof raiseth in us an high admiration and wondering; for it is no common and ordinary thing, that is to be seen in them, when they are seen in the right colours: Our not wondering declareth our sight here to be but common and superficial. It was no ordinary thing in the eyes of the Jewes, when they saw the man leaping and standing & walking, who had been lame from his Mothers womb *Act. 3: 8, 9.* and therefore *they were filled with wonder & amazement v. 10.* When David was musing upon the Lords alseeing knowledge, he cryeth out *Psal. 139: v. 6.* *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

Next, Let us consider the matter and occasion of this Transport of the holy Prophet: what is the thing, which he seeth; and what are his thoughts busied about, causing this Ejaculation? *First.* He seeth God hideing Himself, *Next* He seeth Him hiding Himself, even while He is the God of Israel and the Saviour; or he seeth Him abiding the God Israel, and

Saviour, even while His way is hid, and He will not be seen.

As to the *first* of these, *to wit*, the Lord's hiding himself, that is, bringing about the promised deliverance, and salvation to his people, in a way not discernable & obvious to the eyes and observation of every one; in a way removed from the sight of ordinary beholders; and as to them hid, dark, under ground, and out of the reach of their perception; in which is a Sovereigne, Majestick, Kingly and Stately procedour to be seen by Spiritual eyes; and only by such, as can see God, while covered with clouds, and thick darkness. And this saith, That howbeit in all the wayes and works of the Lord, there is a singular, rare and divine piece of State Majesty and Glory to be seen by Spiritual observers; yet there is sometimes, in the Lords bringing about the deliverance and outgate of his People, so much hid Mysteriousness, and Majestick Imperceptibility, that saith to a gracious observer, that the Lord is hiding *Himself*, and carrying on his Purposes, and perfecting his Work, according to such grounds and rules of Divine Policy, that every one cannot penetrate thereinto, nor discover
his

God's way of delivering is hid. 297

his Footstpes , nor see distinctly the hand of God, at work. As sometimes wise and great Politicians, Statfmen, and Leaders of Armies carry on their designs, in such a way , as ordinary Ionlookers shall not understand what the matter meaneth, nor what is intended, by what they see done with their eyes ; And the more they carry on their work with success in the dark , and hid from the observation of ordinary spectators, the more do they discover their great wit , and give proof of their dexte- rity ; in the managment of affairs of great- est consequence ; and such under-ground workings, and stratagems, carry on them a special piece of Beauty and Glory. Thus our Lord thinketh good sometimes to work , and while working, not let every one see , what he is doing ; but carry on his business, much out of sight, and under ground, and by Holy and Majestick Stratagems ; so as not only enemies shall be ignorant of what He is doing, or about to do ; but many even of his owne follow- ers and friends shall be in the dark. So that the observation of *Job. Chap. 23: 8, 9.* is oft times found to be true, *Behold I go for- ward , but he is not there ; and backward but I cannot perceive him, on the left hand , where*

he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot perceive him. As also of the Psalmist, *Psal. 77: vers. 19.* Thy way is in the Sea, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known.

As all the wayes, and footsteps of the Lord, are full of Majesty, and of hid and unseen Glory; and therefore must be sought out of all that take pleasure therein *Psal. 111: vers. 2.* so that in all of them, the Lord is like Himself, & acteth like Himself; and every piece of them discover to a spiritual observer the Finger of God. So there are some special pieces of work, which are more signal, and remarkable, and wherein the Lords gloriously-working-hand is less obvious; and even these works, upon that very account, are in a special manner Glorious and Majestick; and of such is the truth in hand to be understood, wherein the Lords footsteps are not seen, nor known; nor observable by every one: for further clearing of which point of truth, concerning the Lord's thinking good to work; and yet to hide Himself, so as it shall not be observed by every one, that He is indeed working; we shall mention some few of these speciall

al Works of God , that are thus covered with a cloud of Majesty, that every one cannot understand the Reasons of State, why such and such things are done, or suffered to be done ; nor see the connexion betwixt these Actings, and the intended Designe : As

I. When there is not only a seen and palpable disproportion , betwixt the meanes taken and followed , and the end projected or intended ; and an obvious unsutableness of the meanes used unto the designe to be carried on by them: But the Work of the Lord seemeth to On-lookers to Crosse and Counter-work the intended end. How oft is it seen , that the Works of Gods Providence seem not to run in a subserviency to the bringing effectually about of the Promises; but rather to turn head upon them, and to threaten the utter annulling of them, and rendering of them void, and of no credite? When the present Dispensations of providence are considered, and compared with the great things concerning the Kingdom of Christ promised ; who can see what rational correspondence they keep, & can observe them smiling one upon another, as fit meanes and the end would do ? Nay,

who would not say, that these Dispensations do rather drive on a direct designe to defeat the Promises, who would consult with humane Reason? Is not this then a special piece of the Lord's Work, wherein He hideth himself, and thinketh good to cloath himself with State and Majesty, that every one may not be able to pry into the Depths of his Infinite Wisdom; nor see how all things are laid, and joynted together, with firme bands and ligaments, that cannot be broken or dissolved; and so have a certaine connexion, with the intended and promised good? When *Moses* was sent to deliver the People of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and to tell them good newes, that the Lord had visited them, and looked upon their Affliction, and would now rescue and deliver them from their bondage and slavery *Exod. 4: v. 30, 31.* the Dispensation, that immediatly followed upon the neck of that, seemed to keep no good correspondence therewith, when their yoke was made heavier, and their bondage more grievous, and their slavery and hard work doubled, by the People of *Israel* their being constrained to seek straw for themselves, without diminishing the tale of their bricks; and they hereupon,

who,

Gods work of delivering is hid. 301

who formerly believed the Word of God by Moses, and bowed down and worshipped, when they heard the same, now made to say unto Moses and Aaron *Exod. 5: v. 21.* *The Lord look upon you and judge, because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his Servants, to put a Sword in their hand to slay us.* Yet herein was a piece of that Stately Working of God, which is full of Majesty, which the People could not see; and which Moses himself could not well take up, as his words to God *Vers. 22, 23.* evidence, where he saith ——— Lord! *Wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this People? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh, to speak in thy Name, he hath done evil to this People; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.*

2. When the Dispensations of God are such, as even those, whom they most concerne, & who have greatest interest in them, and are most called therefore to understand them, do not know what to say of them; nor what construction to put upon them; nor what to gather out of them, not only in particular, but even as to a more general matter; that is, they shall not know, whether they speak-out Mercy, or Anger in

God towards them: This must be a singular piece of God's hiding himself, and covering himself with a cloud, that no distinct judgment can be made of what He is doing: Such was that Dispensation, which *Sampsons* Father met with: He and his Wife could not agree in their judgment, as to what they saw *Judg. 13. Manaoh* said *Vers. 22. We shall surly die, because we have seen God.* But his Wife, on the contrary, said *Vers. 23. If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt-offering, and a Meat-offering, at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would he at this time have told us such things, as these.* So as to that strange and unusual Dispensation, which holy *Job* did meet with, he did not know, what the mind of the Lord was, nor what he was intending and driving-at thereby: therefore he resolveth *Chap. 10: Vers. 2.* to say unto God — *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;* which sheweth, that he was utterly ignorant hereof.

3. When the Lord surprizeth His People with a Mercy and a Deliverance, and cometh upon them with an unexpected Out-gate; whether (1.) As to their present Frame and Finess for the mercy and delivery;

Gods work of delivering is hid. 303.

delivery ; Or (2.) As to their Present Hopes and Expectation. When *First*, I say, the Lord cometh with a sweet and merciful delivery unto a People, that seem to be in no present capacity for it, as being out of all good Frame or Eitness, for receiving such a mercy with advantage, because lying in their sin and impenitency; When the Lord cometh with Salvation unto such a people, sure, his way must be covered with darkness, and hid from the eyes of Beholders, with a clothing of Sovereignty; for who could think, that deliverance were upon its march towards such a people, who are not seeking it, nor turning from their sinful wayes, that the Lord may have mercy upon them, according to his usual Method and Order? Such steps of Sovereignty are hid steps of Majesty, and full of Glory; and therein the Lord is hiding Himself, and His way, coming with Salvation in an unusual path: As when he saith *Eesai. 57: 17, 18.* *For the iniquity of his Covetousness, I was wroth, and smote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart, I have seen his wayes, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore Comforts unto him, and to his mourners..* Next, When the

the Lord surprizeth a people with a mercy, that they are not in Expectation of, nor Waiting for, then he acteth, like a stately King, and His Way is Glorious and hid; as it was, when the Captivity was brought back from *Babylon*, concerning which they say *Psal. 126: vers. 2. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them, that dream.* It is true, they had good ground to be now looking for their delivery, because of the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, foretelling that after Seventy Years, they should return back to their owne land; and *Daniel* understood so much, and thereupon, when the time was approaching, set himself to pray *Dan. 9.* But as to the generality, they were, in all appearance, little looking for this outgate; but rather fearing more trouble and vexation, by *Babylons* warrs with the *Medes* and the *Persians*, who were coming against them; though the name of *Cyrus*, because of what was foretold by *Eesai. Ch. 44. and 45.* might have caused them lift up their heads in hope. But notwithstanding of all this, we see, they were, (at least as to the generality and bulk of the people) little looking for an outgate, at this time; & therefore at the first report of freedom, granted:

Gods work of delivering is hid. 305

granted to them to returne, they were like men that dream; scarce beleiving their owne eyes and eares: At which time, while they were in this dreaming posture; how were they surprized with this mercy? And how was the way of the Lord, in His stately Marchings, hid from their eyes? In reference to this same Dispensation of deliverance to his People by *Crim*, is the Prophet here crying out thus; *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thy self*; as the former part of the *Chapter*, from the beginning, cleareth.

4. When Dispensations, upon the one hand, and the other, say, that in humane probability, there is no appearance, or ground of hope of an outgate, or deliverance; yet delivery cometh, in an unexpected way; how hid must the way of the Lord then be? Thus He loveth to hide Himself, in His advancing with Salvation, when there is no appearance to humane Consideration, whether mens eye be upon the Enemies, or upon the People of God themselves: As to Enemies they may (1.) Be Strong, Mighty, and Invincible, the Consideration of which might alone be sufficient to dash all hopes; as who could have thought, that the People of Israel,

Israel, being so under the feet of that mighty Monarch *Pharaoh*, could get out of his Territories, and be freed of his mighty Yoke? (2.) They may not only be strong, but prevalent, and prospering in their evil way, all things succeeding according to their mind; the Lord, as it were, shining upon their Counsels, and granting to them their hearts desire, crossing them in none of their wicked interprizes, and designs; but even suffering them to devise mischief upon their bed, and to put it the next day in execution. Was it not so with *Saul*, in his wicked persecution of *David*, oftentimes? Had he him not sometimes in a net, and compassed him about, on all hands, that there was no apparent escaping? and yet deliverance came. (3.) They may be, also Crafty and Politick, and lay their traines so sure, that they may think they cannot misgive; and have all things prepared to their minde, that in a moment, they may blow up His People, that there should not so much, as a memorial of them be left; and yet be disappointed. The Lord, in an unseen way, may bring about His Peoples deliverance; so was it with the people of the *Jewes*, in the dayes of *Mordecai*, when

when *Haman* had got a Commission sealed by the *Kings* ring, and a Decree passed, that might not be ranversed, or recalled; the day appointed, and designed, and that by a lot, as having something like a divine approbation, Orders dispatched to put all in execution; and thus the mine was ready for the springing; what hop could the poor *Jewes* then have of a delivery? And yet, behold, the *Lord was then a God, that hid himself*: He was counter-working this myne, and laying a back train, that might cause it spring back upon the Authors; and so it did, as the *Storie* cleareth. — When the Enemies thought themselves sure of their designs, and thought it impossible, that their purposes could fail; behold, the God of *Israel*, the Saviour, was hiding himself, and laying an unseen ambush, that cutt them off, who thought to have destroyed the *Jewes*. So upon the other hand, this God will bring about deliverance to his People: When upon their part, there is not one token for good, not one thing apparent, that can be a probable ground of hope: As (1.) When their strength is gone, and there are none shut up or left; not a man, that might be an hopful Instrument, to the fore; all their valiant Men,
[and]

and Men of Courage, and such, of whom any thing could be expected, destroyed and taken away; Yet He, who is a God that hideth Himself, can come in an unseen way, and loveth to come so; according to that gracious Word Deut. 32. vers. 36. *For the Lord shall judge his People, and repent Himself for His Servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* Was it not thus also, in the dayes of Deborah, when there was not a spear or sheild seen among Fourty Thousand in Israel? *Judg. 5: vers 8.* (2.) When their heart and courage is gone, they are desponding and despairing, and looking on their own case as hopeles and helpless; as it is said of the People of Judah, while in Babylon, who said *Ezek. 37: v. 11.* ——— *Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.* Then, even then. when People can see no hope, He, who hideth himself, can say, *Prophecie upon these Bones, and cause breath enter into them, and bring flesh upon them, and cover them with skin, and put breath in them, that they may live* Vers. 3, 4 5, 6, 7, &c. and make them a strong Army. This is among his hid Acts, whereof he hath a rich treasure.

5. When the meanes, which He putteth His peoples upon, in order to their deliverance

The Lords deliverings are oft hid, 309

ance and outgate, are such as promise little or nothing, being considered abstractly; and in themselves, being very unlikely, in humane probability, to effectuate the end designed, then and therein the Lord is a God, that hideth himself: as when he commanded *Iosua* and the People to compass *Iericho*, and to blow with Rams Horns, who could have thought, that that should have proven an adapted mean, for bringing to the ground the strong Walls of the City? And when *Esther* was imployed to effectuate the ransacking of the decree, given out to destroy all the *Jewes*, who could think, that thereby *Haman* should have been destroyed, and all the Enemies of the *Jewes*? Who would have thought, that the stirpling, *David*, should have killed the great *Goliath*, & thereby brought about the defeat of the mighty Army of the *Philistines*? Thus oftentimes the Lord maketh use of most unlikely and improbable meanes, that the excellency of the Power, and the Glory, may be His: And He cometh thus in a dark cloud, with Salvation, without observation, that His hand may more eminently appear and be observed, and His Salvation be more conspicuous.

6. When some very hopful beginning of a good Work of Reformation meeteth with
an

an unexpected stop, and impediment to retard it; this is one of the wayes, wherein the Lord chooseth, to hide Himself and His work; then is His way covered with a cloud, and His footsteps cannot be seen. Thus it was, when contrary Orders came to stop the building of the Temple, after the peoples return from captivity; as we read in the Book of *Ezra*; whereby that necessary work, so much desired, prayed for, hoped for, and with such earnestness begun, was for a considerable time retarded. Thus was it also, when *David* was about the bringing up of the Ark, out of *Kirjath Jearim* to set it in its place, in the midst of the Tabernacle, that was pitched for it; and had for this end assembled the Body of the People of *Israel*, and all the chosen Men of *Israel*, Thirtie Thousand; and was now rejoicing before the Lord, playing before Him, on all manner of Instruments; then, even then, is there an unexpected stop put to the work; for when they were advanced to *Nachons* threshing floor, *Vzzab*, one of the Sones of *Abinadab*, put forth, in his simplicity, his hand to the Ark of God, and took hold of it, for the Oxen shook it; and upon this, the Anger of the Lord was kindled against *Vzzab*, and God smote him there, for his error, and there he died by the Ark of
God

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 311

God 2 Sam. 6: vers. 5, 6. And upon this, the work is stayed; for David was afrayed of the Lord, that day; and would not remove the Ark unto him, unto the City of David; but carried it aside unto the House of Obed Edom, the Gittite, where it stayed full three Moneths, Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11. See 1 Chron. 13.

7. When even the Godly are left of God, to take such courses, as do provoke God to anger, prove stumbling blocks to the Godly, and a strengthening of the wicked, in their evil wayes; and to bring wrath upon the Land; then doth the Lord hide Himself, and hath His way in the Sea; for who can consider this Dispensation and not be astonished? Are the Reasons hereof obvious to all? Is there not something singular, uncouth, and rare, in this Dispensation? Thus was it, when the Lord left Gideon to make that Ephod, which proved a snare to him and to his House, and an occasion of sin to the Land; for it is said *All Israel went thither a whoreing after it Judg. 8: vers. 27.* And this was, when the Lord had wrought a great deliverance by him, and had subdued Midian; so that they lifted up their heads, no more. Thus also was it, when the Lord left Aaron to make that Calfe, in the Wilderness, that brought so much Sin and Wrath,

Wrath upon the People, as we see *Exod. 32. and 33. Deut. 9: vers. 8, — 21.* Thus was it also, when the Lord suffered *David* to number the People, & moved him, as it is said *2 Sam. 24: vers. 1.* or suffered *Satan* to stand up to provoke him thereunto, as it is said *1 Chron. 21: vers. 1.* A deed that cost *Israel* dear; for therefore the Lord sent a Pestilence, that destroyed, in three dayes, Seventy Thousand Men *1 Chron. 21: v. 14. 2 Sam. 24. 15.*

8. So we may conceive the Lord to be a God that hideth himself, when we see wicked enemies employed, and actively bestirring themselves, in carrying forward the Lords Work: It is true, when these Enemies are most active, in carrying on their wicked Designs, and malicious Purposes; the Lord, who overruleth all, as the great Master of Work, turneth their desperat wickedness to good, and in his Holy Wisdom, and by his Irresistible Power, maketh that contribute to His ends; and to the carrying-on of his Holy Designs; for He hath a wheel in the midst of all their wheels: and in this, the Lords way is indeed in the deep waters, so that Enemies cannot perceive this; and his own People are oft in the mist; and through unbeliefe, and faithless fear, have oftentimes unsutable thoughts of God,

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 313

God, and of His Way. But the thing that we are now speaking of, is a passage of the Lords Providence, that is more rare and observable; when, *to wit*, the Lord will force and necessitate Enemies to do that, which is a manifest and plaine setting forward of His work, contrare to their owne wills and inclinations; as when the *Philistines* were constrained to send home the Ark to *Israel* againe 1 *Sam.* 6: This was a Majestick piece of Providence: And that, which made the way of the Lord more hid here, was this, that the Lord would rather bring home the Ark thus, than employ the *Israelites* themselves, and send them forth to recover the Ark by a glorious Victory over the *Philistines*. We would readily think, that He should rather have done this; but He is a God that hideth himself; and chooseth what way He thinketh meet.

9. The Lord manifesteth himself to be a God that hideth himself, in His workings: when in His holy Providence He delayeth, procrastineth, and suffereth His intended and promised work to meet with retarding hinderances and impediments: we would think, that when the Lord did so wonderfully and with such an outstretched arme bring the People of *Israel* out of the furnace of *Aegypt*, to the end he might make good

O

His

His promise to *Abraham*, and put his posterity, according to His faithful word, in possession of that promised land; he should incontinent, after He had brought them about the red sea, and brought them to the very border of *Canaan*, have entered them into *Canaan*: Yet we see, He caused them to wander in a waste howling Wilderness Fourtie Years. Againe, when He brought them over *Jordan*, we would think He should in all haste, with great expedition have destroyed the *Canaanites*, that in a short time *Israel* might have had peaceable possession of the whole Land: Yet we see, the Lord thought good to do otherwayes. And how many a time, doth He think good to exercise the Patience and Faith of His People; and for this end delay the carrying on and perfecting of the work He intendeth? And this He doth, not for want of strength to go over all Opposition; nor for want of Wisdom, as if he were put to new Resolutions, and to a stand, in carrying-on his old Purposes: But that he may give proof of His Majestick Sovereignty; and shew how Stately and Glorious He is in His Operations, performing all, according to the Counsel of His own will; cutting short His Work, when we might think, it could not be finished, in haste; and againe drawing
it

it forth to a longer period of time, when we would think, that all things cry for His hastning of it.

10. The Lord hideth Himself, in His workings, when He suffereth Enemies at once to destroy and overthrow a work, that hath been long in building, and hath been carried-on with much trouble, toile, work and care, by prayers, fastings, and blood. We understand not, what that meaneth, which the Lord saith by *Jeremiab*, unto *Baruch* *Jer. 45: 4.* ——— Behold, that which I have built, will I break down; and that which I have planted, I will pluck up, even this whole land. But this is a piece of His working, who loveth sometimes to be a God that hideth himself. It is a sad complaint, which the Church hath *Psal. 74: vers. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.* Thine Enemies roar in the midst of thy Congregations, they set up their ensignes for signes. A man was famous, according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees: But now they break down the carved work thereof at once, with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary. ——— They said in their hearts, let us destroy them together. They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land. Thus was there more destroyed in one Year, than was built-up in many. Is not our Lord, in such a case, a God, that hideth Himself? Who

can see thorow such a Dispensation, as this?

11. There is a time also, in which we may say, the Lord is a God, that hideth himself; and that is, when his Dispensations are so mixed and composed, to speak so, of mercy and judgment, that People shall not know, which to regard most; or what to judge of the complex Business. As it was when the Ark came to the *Bethshemites*, there was great joy, and offering of burnt Offerings, and Sacrificeing of Sacrifices, *1 Sam. 6: vers. 13, 15.* But behold, ere the day was ended, their mourning was as great as their joy; for the Lord slew Fifty Thousand and Threescore and Ten Men, because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord *v. 19* Whereupon the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten them, with a great slaughter; and they said *vers. 20. Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God; and to whom shall we go up from us?* A wonderful dispensation, wherein the Lord shewed himself to be a God, that hideth Himself.

12. We may adde to these another case, in which, the Lord may be looked upon, as one that hideth himself; and that is, when He is unwilling to make use of holy and useful Instruments, of whom much might be expected, and who would willingly spend themselves, and be spent in the service of the Lord

Lord. As the Lord thinketh good to make use of Instruments, in his work; so it is an hopeful business, when the Lord raiseth up, sitteth and animateth Instruments, for carrying on of his work; and the Lord is then appearing in His power, on the head of His work: But when He saith, by His dispensations, that He will not make use of hopeful, and steadable Instruments, for beginning or carrying on of His work, then He is, as it were, hid, and his footsteps cannot be seen. Whether (1.) He expressly declareth, that he will not make use of such or such a worthy Instrument, that would gladly be Employed in the work; as when *David* did so earnestly desire to be employed in building of Gods House; yet the Lord said, he should not build Him an House: He would not have that service from him, 2 Sam. 7. but would employ one out of his loines for that end; and *David* must be content to prepare money and materials for the work. Or (2.) When the Lord taketh away Instruments, before their work be ended; as He did *Moses*, who would faine have passed over *Jordan*, to have seen that good Land, and have perfected his work of leading the people thereinto. Or (3.) When He suffereth worthy and eminent Instruments to be snatcht away basely and unworthily; as we

see in *John Baptist*, a man that had not a marrow that day upon the face of the earth; the only forerunner of Christ; greater then any Prophet, that was before him; and a man that had done much goods; yet see how unworthily he is taken away; he is cast in prison, and at the desire of a light dancing damsel, prompted thereto by a base and unworthy harlot; and taken away in a most unworthy manner, murdered in his prison, and his head given as a propine and satisfying gift to that girle. What a wonderful dispensation was this, that the Lord should suffer them to do to this non-such and eminent man, even what they would, and lifted? But in these and the like workings of the Lord, He is a God that hideth himself.

We have thus declared how the Lord is a God, that hideth himself, even when He is about to do good to, and to deliver his People; and have, for further clearing and explaining of the mater, given some instances of cases, wherein the Lord may be said to be a God hiding himself. It we should now enquire, Why and for what Reasons doth the Lord choose to work so, and bring about deliverance to His people, in such an hid and unobservable manner? It should satisfy us for an *answere*. That thus

it pleaseth Him to do, for his own glorious ends, which we may not too curiously pry into: Yet seeing all that God doth, is done in great wisdom, both for matter, and method; and for holy ends, which His word mentioneth; we may so far, with soberness and humility, enquire into these, to the end, we may be able to observe something of the wise & holy workings of God, and so be in better case, with knowledge & understanding, to carry ourselves as Christians, with a suitable frame and disposition. To the *Question* then, Why the Lord thinketh good to follow this way? We answer, He doth it for great and weighty reasons, partly (1.) concerning Himself; partly (2.) concerning Enemies: and partly (3.) concerning His own People.

As to the *first*, the reasons concerning Himself, we may take notice of these.

1. The Lord thinketh good, to bring about His purposes of delivering His people, in an hid, unseen, and unobservable way, that He may shew forth the glory of his Sovereignty, who chooseth Ways and Methods, as He pleaseth; and doth, as whatever he will, so after what manner he will, in heaven and in earth; and is not obliged to follow ordinary methods, or to walk in beaten and troden paths; but to do what

beseemeth a great King and a Royal Sovereigne, who giveth not an account of any of his matters; whose will is a law to us, and a rule (to speak so) to himself. Hence, in this same Chapter *Esaï. 45.* is this so oft repeated, *I am the Lord, and none else.* vers. 5, 6, 18, 21. Hereby laying down the ground of His so acting; and quieting his peoples mindes, and stilling their thoughts, concerning this matter.

2. The Lord thinketh good to trade in such an unseen way, that spiritual eyes may the more see, that *itis He*, even *He*, who is God, and there is none else; that *itis He*, who formeth the light and createth darkness; who maketh peace and createth evil; and is the Lord, who doth all these things vers. 7. Wherein should it appear, that He were Jehovah, if, in all things, he should work according to the thoughts and imaginations of men? Is not this a manifest proof of His being God, when his wayes and Actings transcend our Comprehensions? Though in all his wayes and workings, He is God, and worketh and doth like himself, even in such as are most ordinary and obvious; and a Spiritual eye can discern and espve something truely divine, & the marks of a divine hand; there yet when His way is in the deep waters, and his foot-steps cannot be seen, He
acteth

Gods deliverings are oft times hid. 327

acteth in a manner more like Himself, like one, who is indeed God, and whose wayes are beyond and above the reach of Men, the wisest, and holiest of Men; and then may all have ground to say, This is the finger of God, as the Magicians of Egypt said, when the Lord did somethings, which they with all their inchantments could not imitate *Exod. 8: 18, 19.*

3. The Lord chooseth this way, to give some signal proof of His *Wisdom*; if Statismen should mannage and carry-on their affairs of State, alwayes in such an open and plaine manner, that every plaine and simple man, that knoweth nothing of the intrigues of State, should be able to discern their motions, designs and all their contrivances, they would not give great proof of their State-wisdom and Policy. And if a Commander and Leader of an army should so manage all his affairs, in that conduct, that the meanest souldier should be able to discover and understand all his designs, and stratagems; he should give but a fory proof of his singular dexterity in conduct. But when the Statisman, and the Commander in chiefe so carry on their projects, that few or none can well understand what their Designe and Intention is, then a demonstration is given of their Ability, Wisdom and

Accomplishment, for such places of power and trust. So when the Lord hideth His holy Purposes and Projects, and acteth so, as ordinary on-lookers will suppose & imagine that he is going East, when He mindeth to march west ward; and even many of his own will think, that He is about to destroy his work and people, when He is upon His way to raise them up, and set them on high, and to destroy the Adversarieship and thigh, then His deep and unsearchable Wisdom appeareth. Then it appeareth, that He also is wise *Esaï. 31: 2.* Job got a sight of this, in the Lords rare works of providence *Job. 12: 12, 13.* to the end; and therefore saith, *with the ancient is wisdom, and in length of dayes understanding, with Him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.* So Paul got such a sight of this, that made him cry out *Rom. 11: 33.* *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God? how unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out?*

4. Hereby also the Lord giveth a clear demonstration of his Faithfulness and Truth. If He were carrying-on the accomplishment of his Promises and Purposes of good towards his people, in a visible, discernable and obvious manner, folks would have but an ordinary and cursory observation of His faith-

Gods deliverings are oft times hid. 313

Faithfulness; and their hearts accordingly would be but in an ordinary manner affected, and they moved but to praise and blesse Him therefore, of course; for, remarking nothing singular, their hearts would not be raised up, above what is usual and ordinarie, to admire & extol Him, upon that account. But when he followeth another method, & taketh an unusual course, to bring about his grand designs, and such a course, as whereby Enemies might think, He did not see, nor regard, He would never come to helpe His people, the day was theirs, they should prosper, and never be moved; for there is no appearance, or probability, might they think, that ever the case shall alter, & our affairs be overturned; & upon the other hand, whereby his owne People might see no visible or probable ground of hope, that the promises should be accomplished, & the word of the Lord should take effect; then His appearance with salvation, after he had wrought so long under ground, & out of sight, & all hope was gone from them, & fear from the enemy, is much more remarkable; & his Faithfulness shineth forth with a more then ordinary Glance and Lustre: It cometh forth then with a witness: Then they see and say, that his faithfulness is unto the clouds Psal. 36: 5. that his righteousness

ness is like the great mountains, and his judgments are a great depth ver. 6. and that his faithfulness is unto all generations Psal. 119: 90. So that no vicissitudes, or changes here below, can alter Him; no delay of time or procrastination, or the like, can make any alteration in Him; for his faithfulness is unto all generations. Then will they praise his Truth Psal. 71: 22.

But next as to such grounds, and reasons hereof, as concerne Enemies, we may take notice of these

I. He cometh with deliverance unto His people, in a way not obvious nor observable, that enemies may appear in their own colours; and give a plaine and open discovery of the latent malice and wickedness of their heart against the People of God: If the Lord did alwayes appear openly and manifestly, in the behalfe of His owne; & let all the world see, that He owned them for His people; and would suffer none to do them harme: the malice and wickedness of many latent enemies, who can speak with their mouth smooth words, smother than butter, and softer than oile, when war is in their heart, & drawn swords Psal. 55: 21. would not appear: But when the Lord hideth himself, and goeth out of sight, then they say, as it is Psal. 71: 11. God hath forsaken
ken

The Lords delivering is oft hid. 325

ken him, persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver. Because they say in their heart, God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see; therefore their mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under their tongue is mischief and vanity; they sit in the lurking places of the villages, in the secret places do they murder the innocent; their eyes are privily set against the poor &c. Psalm 10: vers 8, 9, 10, 11.

2. The Lord maketh choise of this manner of way of appearing, and working for His people, that Enemies may be judicially hardened, in their wicked course of opposition to His Interest and People; & so fitted for the fatal blow of God's Justice. As it was with Pharaoh, when the plagues were taken off, and God's terrour removed out of sight, he became alwayes thereupon more hardened in his wickedness against God and His people; and thereafter when he saw, that the people of Israel were ensnared betwixt mountains and the sea, and so judged, that God had left them, or could not helpe them, then his heart was hardened unto a peremptory resolution, to pursue and take them, even through the red sea, and there the wrath of God fell upon him, and all his army.

3. The Lord carrieth on His work thus,

O 7. that

that the ruine of the enemies may be the more signal and remarkable, and the hand of God manifestly seen therein, when they are puffed up with pride, and think no hand can reach them, they are beyond all hazard; no appearance is there of any thing, that can put the least demurre unto their wicked proceedings: The blow becometh the more remarkable, them ore surprizing, and unexpected that it is: Such was that fatal blow, that came on *Pharaoh*, and his hostes; and on *Belsazzar*, when ravelling with his Nobles, Wives and Concubines, and profaning the holy vessels of the house of the Lord *Dan. 5.*

4. The Lord thinketh good to follow this way: That He may, the more observably, fill the faces of his Enemies with shame and confusion: therefore he he will suffer them to carry on their designs, to lay their mines close, to prepare all, so that nothing may seem to remaine, but putting fire to the traine, that they may blow up the Interest and People of God, in a moment; and when they think all is ready, give them a fearful disappointment; and withal let them see, that He, who is the watchman of Israel, hath seen what they have been doing, all that time, in secret, and hath been counter-working their devices.

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 327

ces, and undermining their mines, when he shall cause their mine spring back upon themselves; and thus cover their faces with shame and confusion; when they shall see, that it is the hand of God, that hath done it, defeating their plots and devices, which were laid and carried-on with such secrecy, and with such providential foresight, and rational security; that nothing but the immediate hand of God could frustrate and defeat them. Was it not so with *Hamans* device and bloody plot, to cut off all the *Jewes*? And how shamefully came he off? Thus the Lord destroyeth the wisdom of the wise *Esa. 29: 14.*

5. The Lord taketh this way, to the end, He may shame (if it can be) those enemies from their wicked atheistical thoughts concerning Him; that they may know, that there is a God, that ruleth in the earth; a God that careth for His people, & watcheth over his Inheritance; or else, they may be rendered the more inexcusable, in the day of their appearance before God. Thus the Lord will consume such, as belch out with their mouth, have swords in their lips, and say, who doth hear? That they may know, that God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of Earth *Psal. 59: 7, 13.* An eminent place for this we have *Esa. 49.* The Lord
hid

hid Himself, so that his people became a prey, and were captives; yet saith the Lord *vers. 24, 25, 26.* *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty; or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord; even the Captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered &c.* And what then? *And all flesh shall know, that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.*

6. The Lord thinketh fit to follow this way, that hypocrites, and such as are not heart friends to Him & His cause, may be discovered, may fall off, and so appear to be what indeed they are. If the Lord were alwayes appearing for His people, when ever they began to be in a strait, and visibly making bare His arme, in their behalfe, many hollow hearted & false friends would take part with them, and stay among them; and seem to love and faviour them; Therefore, that they may be made manifest, the Lord hideth himself, and appeareth not so openly for his friends; but suffereth them to fall under the feet of enemies, who oppress them, and all that take their part; which occasioneth their stepping aside, & turning away from the Truth, as not being reconciled with the crosse, nor loving Christ, and his People so, as to take a share with

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 329.

with them in the Affliction and Bondage. How many, who appeared zealous, in a faire day, will turn about, and side with wicked and evil doers, to be free of the crosse; and when they see no foot-steps more of the Lords appearing for his Work and Interest?

On the other hand, in the *third* place, the Lord thinks good, to follow this way, for some good ends, in reference to His own people: As

I. The Lord doth thus, that he may discover the hid Corruption, that lurketh in His own people, which in a fair day, when He is upon their head, marching through the host of the Enemy, and tradeing them under foot, who oppressed His people, and kept them at under, will lye at the bottom, and not appear. As (1.) *Vnbeleefe*, when the arme of the Lord is revealed, they cannot then but beleeve, That He is the Lord, and the God of his people; they cannot then have the least doubt about this: But many Doubts, Questions, Scruples and Hesitations, will arise in their soul, when the Lord's face is hid, and He appeareth not in behalfe of His Afflicted People and Interest: The Disciples did openly enough professe their faith in Christ, as the Messiah, & the Son of the living God, while
he

was with them, He working miracles before their eyes; but when once he was crucified, dead and buried, *Thomas* would not beleeve, no not though the other Disciples had told him, that they had seen the Lord; nor would he beleeve, as he said expressly himself, unless he should see, in his hand, the print of the nails, and put his finger in the print of the nails, and thrust his hand, in his side *Job. 20: 25*. And what unbeleeve these Disciples vented, who were going to *Emmaus*, unto the Lord himself, whom they knew not, we may see *Luk. 24: 21*. and may gather from Christ's sharpe rebuke *vers. 25, 26*. *O fools and slow of heart to beleeve all, that the Prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his Glory? (2.) Fainting of heart.* So long as the shipe saileth faire before the winde, a raw sea-man will have courage enough: Men at Christ's back, who have not yet had a storme blowing in their face, will be as stout as *Peter*, who nothing doubted, but he would lay down his life for his Master; who yet, when the Lord is out of sight; and his cause seemeth to be upon the declineing hand, will shrink and turn back, at a very small temptation: As *Peter* did deny his Master, and that with cursing and swearing, at the very word of
a Dam

a Damsel. (3.) *Self love* is another evil, that such a day as this will discover: Many will appear very self-denied, and willing to hazard all for Christ and His Cause, in a faire day, who, when a storme cometh, will be unwilling enough to cast their goods over board to save the shipe: In a day, when the Lord is hiding himself, many will seek to save skin and life, by such indirect courses, as sometime they would have been ashamed of. (4.) *Impatience*: How doth the heart of many too often say little less, than that graceless King said, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I waite any longer for the Lord?* 2 King. 6: vers. 33. Such expressions, as that good man had, in that dark day, do evince this sufficiently Psal. 77: v. 7, 8, 9. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?*

2. The Lord followeth this way and methode, that he may put his people to the trial and exercise of the graces of His Spirit; such as these (1.) Their Faith in Him, and in His Word and Promise: It is no great art or difficulty to beleve, that God will make good His promise, when he is, in the sight of all beholders, most manifestly accom-

accomplishing whatever he said and promised: But for *Abraham* to beleeve, that in his seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, and that his Seed should be multiplied, as the Stars of the Heaven, for multitude, when he had not one Child, and himself was stricken in years, his body now as good as dead, he being about an hundred Yeers old, and when *Sarabs* Womb was also dead; that was faith; then his faith appeared, while he against hope beleeved in hope, when he staggered not at the promise of God, through unbeliefe, but was strong in the faith giving Glory to God; for he was fully perswaded, that what God had promised, He was able also to perform *Rom 4: vers. 18, 19, 20, 21.* Again, it was no great matter for *Abraham* to beleeve, that it would be, as the Lord had said, when *Sarah* was with Childe, & had brought forth her Son, and he was healthy and thriving; but to beleeve the accomplishment of the promise, when God said unto Him, Go offer up thy Son, thy only Son *Isaac*, there was faith, accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, *Heb. 11: vers. 19.* Thus faith is both tried and exercised. (2.) *Patience* is also tried and exercised, when the Lord is out of sight, & seemeth to say, He will not yet come, the time is not yet come:

We

We oft cry out, How long will the Lord hide his face; not so much out of an earnest love and desire to see his face againe, as out of impatience *Psal* 6 *vers.* 2. and 13: v. 1. and 35: 17. and 90: 13. *Job.* 7: v. 19. *Hab.* 1: v. 2. The Lord will thus teach his people to stand upon their watch, and upon the watch tower, till the Vision, that is yet for an appointed time, and tarrieth, shall speak *Hab.* 2: *vers.* 1, 3. (3.) To try and exercise their hope: for that is the fit time for the exercise of this grace, when humane appearance and probability faileth, and when the Lord hideth himself, and delayeth his coming *Rom.* 8: v. 24, 25. for usually then people are ready to say, there is no hope *Esa.* 57: 10. & our hope is lost *Ezek.* 37: 11. What is my strength (saith holy *Job* *Ch.* 6: 11.) that I should hope? It is good in such a case, to say, with the Church *Lam.* 3: 24. The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in Him. (4.) To try and exercise their Submission to and Dependence upon Him. That they may learne to carry as humble Children: that they may say with David, *Psal.* 131. Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty. neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely, I have behaved and quieted myself, as a Childe, that is weaned of his Mother, my soul is as a weaned Childe: And so hope in the Lord.

Lord, not arrogantly set limites unto the holy One of Israel, nor prescribe a way, that he must follow; but leave him to follow His own way and method, with due Submission and Dependance, laying the hand upon the mouth, when He is pleased to hide himself, and to take another way, then we would possibly wish, or desire. (5.) To try & exercise their *Diligence* and *Constancy*, in *Prayer* and *Watchfulness*. As when the Master delayeth his coming; so when he hideth himself, as if he were not coming, or would not come, many are ready to fall from duty, and fall a beating their fellow servants, and to eating and drinking &c. *Mat. 24: 48, 94*. Therefore the Lord will have all His People set a watching, as not knowing what houre, or after what manner He will come; and to exercise them in this duty of Watchfulness and Diligence; he will come, and not let them know of His coming, nor tell them when, or after what manner He will come.

The Consideration of this should, in general, reach all His people, as upon the one hand to guard against, and beware of these evils mentioned, which Satan and Corruption, upon occasion of the Lords hiding of His Way, and keeping Himself under

under clouds , after the manner mentioned, doth provoke & stirre up the soul unto; so, upon the other hand, to minde & faithfully set about the Duties mentioned , which are especially called for , at such a time. But more particularly we may mention some duties , and recommend them to the practice of His People , in such a day , as this : As

I. This Dispensation calleth upon all Gods People , to be observing the Lord in all His wayes and actions, and to mark His footsteps, even when they can not be seen; to observe His stately goings, in Majestie, like a Prince , that will not walk in the view of every common Subject, nor suffer every mean person to be privie to his Secrets of State. These rare and unusual works of the Lord call for more then ordinary observation. It is a mark of graceless persons, and a sin bringing-on sad and ruineing strokes , to consider none of Gods wayes *Job. 34: vers. 26, 27.* That is a divine precept *Prov. 23: 26.* *My Son give me thy heart, and let thine eyes observe my wayes* shewing that this is the Duty of all the Children of God , as to observe the Precepts of God, so also his Wayes and Workings ; and that it can be performed a right
only

336 Confid. 20. Gods deliverings

only by such, whose hearts are given away to God; and that it argueth an heart fixed upon, and united to God, as being a native and kindly consequent thereof. At the end of a large Historical narration of many remarkable passages of the Lord's Providence, the holy Psalmist thus concludeth *Psal. 107. vers. last. Who so is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* Showing what the spiritually wise will do, and what advantage they will have by thus considering the singular wayes of the Lord. This Considering of the wayes, and workings of the Lord, comprehendeth these things, (1.) A beleiving that God, howbeit unseen, yet is working; though clouds hide Him out of their sight; yet they do not hinder Him from working; He is working, though we perceive Him not. (2.) A musing and pondering and dwelling on the thoughts of God and His wayes. As when the Lord saith *Psal. 50. Consider this, yet that forgets God*, He presseth them to a serious meditation and pondering of what was said. (3.) A seeing and observing of a stately Majesty, in the Lords carrying on his work, after such an hid manner. (4.) A passing of a sutable and wise judgment on

on what *He* is doing, construing all to the best. This is to consider wisely of his doing, as *Psal. 64: vers. 9.* (5.) A serious observing of every discovery or appearance, or speaking effect of the Lord's working, to the end they may speak thereof to others, and declare the **Work** of the Lord, and be confirmed in their faith and hope, and encouraged to waite.

2. In such an hiding time, when the Lord is pleased to hold Secret Councel, and to act and carry on his Stratagems, accordingly, it becometh all *His People*, to act *Faith* and *Fear*; *Faith*, to beleieve in hope against hope; and *Fear*, to stoup and stand in awe; knowing that *He* is God, and will act like himself: How happy is it to get a sight of an Absolute, Invisible Sovereigne, when *He* is hiding himself, as a stately Prince?

3. As in a time of darkness, when his people sit in darkness, and have no light, they are called to *stay themselves upon God*; *Eesai. 50.* So in a time, wherein the Lord is walking out of sight, and no man seeth what *He* is doing, *His people* are called to live by faith. *Now the just shall live by Faith Heb. 10.* When was this? When he,

P

who

338 Confid. 20. Gods deliverings

who should come, was not yet come : and there was little appearance of his coming When the Vision was not yet speaking *Hab. 2: vers. 2, 3.*

4. *Waiting*, Is especially called for, at His peoples hand, in such a day ; which includeth the exercise of *Faith*, *Hop* and *Patience* ; *Faith*, to realize the thing promised, and give an objective being (as it were) to that which is not visible, in it self, nor apparent ; *Hope*, to embrace, and to stretch forth the armes to lay hold on what is promised ; and *Patience*, to keep the Believer in the Possession of his soul, in the meane time. This was the Resolution of the holy Prophet *Esaïas Chap. 8: vers. 17. And I will wait upon the Lord, that bideth his face from the House of Jacob : And I will look for him.*

5. It is the Duty of His People in such a day, wherein the Lord is hiding Himself, and is walking and working under clouds ; to be *sloping* and *adoring* ; which comprehendeth these duties following, (1.) Not to quarrel with, nor to grudge, fret, nor repine at the Lords taking of this course, for the glory of his own name. (2.) To look upon and consider Him, as one, whose wayes are unsearchable, and past finding-

finding-out: As perceiving Depths that are unsearchable, in all His wayes. (3.) Upon this account, to look and consider upon His Wayes with Fear, Dread and Reverence. (4.) To beware to set limites to the holy One of Israel; or to conclude that He will not come to save His People and Inheritance, because he cometh not in the way, which we imagine He must come; as if infinite Wisdom could not finde out wayes, beyond what ever we can imagine. (5.) To have high and sublime thoughts of Him, and to speak of Him, as such an high and exalted Prince, whose wayes are out of our reach, and beyond all our Apprehensions.

6. His Children would, in such a day, labour to *live nigh God* by faith: that hereby (1.) They may be kepted from fainting, while compassed with darkness, assaulted with Satans Temptations, who then will be busie tempting Gods People, to say, there is no hope now, God hath forsaken the Earth; He will returne no more. (2.) They may be kepted from siding with the Workers of Iniquity, and from turning aside to evil courses, because there is no manifest appearance of the Lord's returning to rid His People out of thralldom, and

to break the Power of the Adversary. (3.) They may get some discoveries, now and then, as the Lord seeth good to grant them, of God, even while hiding himself, which may endear Him unto their soul, and warm their heart towards Him: Such as live thus by faith nigh to God, in such a day, are faire to see that, which others, living at a distance, shall not partake of. (4) They may be led of God, by an unseen hand, in such a dark day; *for the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way, Psal. 25: v. 9.* And the Secret of the Lord is with them, that fear him *vers. 14.*

We come next to speak to the *Second Particular*, which the Prophet discovered through this thick cloud: He saw this hid God to be the God of Israel, & the Saviour; and he owned him, as such; and spoke and prayed to him, as such: from whence we may observe these *Three Things*,

First, That all the darks and hidden passages of the Dispensations of the Lord about His People, do not alter or change his Relation to and Covenant-Interest in His People. A forsaking God can and will be a Beleevers God, notwithstanding there-
of *Psal. 22: v. 1. My God, my God, why hast*

thou

thou forsaken me? This holdeth true of a Church, ay and while He give her a bill of divorce, and excommunicate her, after she hath proven obstinate and incurable in her wickedness: Hence we finde the Lord so often owning a wicked and sinful People, as His, as *Psal. 50: vers. 7. Hear, O my People, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testifie against thee, I am God, thy God:* And yet the following Verses declare how unlike to His People they were, And it holdeth alwayes true of Beleevers, who have closed a Covenant with him by faith: And that upon these Grounds,

I. The unchangableness of His purposes, which alter not, according as outward Dispensations change; but are stable as mountains, and as rocks in the Sea, that are not moved for all the motion of the sea about them, and all changes of tides; and tempests: Hence, *whom he loveth, he loveth to the end Job. 13: vers. 1. He is no changling in his love, it is like himself, unalterable.* Hence also His gifts and calling are said to be *without repentance Rom. 11: vers. 29.* And, which is very remarkable; this is spoken concerning the Lords purpose of calling home the People of the *Jewes*, who have been lying under the

weight of their own doom and imprecation; and are yet as unlike to be delivered, as ever, of whom the Apostle saith, that though as concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for our sakes, yet as touching the Election, they are beloved for the Fathers *Vers. 28.* and as a Confirmation of which, he addeth, *for the gifts and callings of God, (or the gift of the calling of God) are without repentance.* So that the purposed gifts, or intended callings of God will, and must be; the Lord not being as man, that he should repent. A Balaam, when he took up his parable, could say, *Numb. 23: 19. God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the Son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said and shall he not do? Or, hath he not spoken, and shall he not make it good?* So said the Prophet Samuel *1 Sam. 15: vers. 29. And also the strength (or the Eternity and Victory) of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.* And this abideth firme, notwithstanding that sometimes we read of Gods repentings, which is only to import the change of his outward Dispensations, sometimes to the better *Deut. 32: vers. 36. Judg. 2: vers. 18. Exod. 32: 14. 2 Sam. 24: 16. 1 Chron. 21: 51. Jer. 26. v. 19. Psal. 106: 45. Amos. 7: 3. 6. Jon. 3:*

God's deliverings are oft hid. 343

Jon. 3: vers. 10. Sometimes to the worse
Gen 6: vers. 6. & *Sam. 15: vers. 35.* And
so is spoken of God after the manner of
men, who evidence the change of their
minde, by the change of their outward
carriage, way and work. Man is a chang-
able Creature; but with God *there is no var-*
riableness, nor shadow of turning Jam. 1: 17.
Hence the Lord saith of Himself, *I am God,*
and change not. Mal. 3: 6.

2. The Covenant, in which this
Relation and Interest is offered and ac-
cepted, is an unchangable Covenant.
Hence we finde it called an everlasting Co-
venant, ordered in all things, and sure
2 Sam. 23: vers. 5. So *Esai. 55: 3.* and *61:*
vers. 8. *Jer. 32: v. 40.* *Ezech. 37. vers. 26.*
Heb. 13: 20. It is an everlasting Covenant,
and all things, promised and held forth in
this Covenant, are the *sure mercies of David*
Esai. 55: 3. *Act. 13: 34.* And therefore,
seing all the Dispensations of God, in and
about His Church and People, turn upon
this wheel, and run into this channel of
mercy, being parts or appendices of the
sure mercies of David, they can make no
change or alteration in the fountaine, out
of which they all spring; Water, coming
out of one & the same fountaine, may run in

diverse channels, some greater, and some lesse, & these channels may at length run to a great distance from other, and the water in them may not be alike clear and free of mud; and yet all this diversity, and difference, can make no difference or alteration in the spring, and wells head.

3. Nay, all those various and discrepant dispensations are but pieces and parts of that one grand designe, which the Lord is prosecuting; *to wit*, the glorifying of his great Name and Free grace, in the salvation of his Church and People through Jesus Christ: And therefore, the difference or alteration, that is apparent in & among them, is so far from giving ground, to inferre any mutation of the Lords Interest in, and relation to His people; that to a Spiritual, seeing and beleeving eye, they do the rather and the more confirme the same; because such an eye will see the connexion betwixt all these as meanes, and the great end designed; and will see, that they are all subordinat unto, and are concurring effectually, in their subordinat place, to the securing of the end intended, in which they are all meeting together, as lines in a center drawn from the circumference.

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 345

4. Fountaine - love runneth along, in all these various dispensations, & so Modifieth, Tempereth, Qualifieth, and Ordereth them, that they can make no breach upon that firme and everlasting Relation; nor work any substantial change in the State and Condition of His people: Scourges and Chastisements are not a casting out of the house, and a disinheriting; but flow from, and are qualified by fatherly love and care, whatever the witless child suppose, or imagine: *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son, whom he receiveth, Heb. 12. 6. Prov. 3. 12.*

5. So is it contracted, in the Covenant of Redemption, betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator *Psal. 89: 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, If his children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments. Then will I visite their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* The accomplishment therefore of this Article of that Covenant, is rather a proof and confirmation of its stability, and inviolableness; and conse-

P 5. quently

quently of the permanency of the Relation and State, than of any change and alteration in the same; and all the changes of the dispensations of the Lord towards his People, should rather confirm them, in the faith of this, than raise doubts or jealousies in their minds.

From whence, by way of Use, we may see, how reprobable many even of the Children of God are, who measure Gods love, by these outward dispensations; & accordingly are up or down, in their hops and joyes, as these alter to the better, or to the worse. We do not hereby meane, that they should not be suitably affected with the various dispensations of the Lord, in and about them; we do not presse a stoical insensibility, which is but a stupidity; for on the contrarie we say, it becometh them well to weep, when the bridegroom is away, as to rejoyce while he is present. When the Lion roareth they should fear and tremble *Amos. 3: 8*. When the Lord is angry, they should bear his indignation, because they have sinned *Micab. 7: 9*. But the thing here reprov'd is their construing of Gods Minde, Affection and Covenant-Relation towards them, according to these outward dispen-

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 347

sations, and the hideings of himself, like a foolish childe, that would think the Mother had forsaken him and cast him off, each time that she were out of sight, or set him out of her armes : So that the thing here reprovab, is their drawing wrong Conclusions from these outward changes ; such as these. (1.) God hideth Himself, therefore His heart is changed, and He is no more their Father ; His love is altered. His Grace , Favour and Promises fail. (2.) God hideth Himself, and they see Him not ; therefore all are undone, there is no more hope, we are cut off for our parts ; as *Ezekiel*. 37. (3.) God hideth Himself, therefore we are cast out of the Covenant, our state is changed, we have no more any place in his favour, or room in his love ; we are in the state of the dead. (4) The Lord hideth Himself, & is out of sight ; therefore all that He hath done formerly , and we looked upon , as His work of grace & love, have been but delusions, and not his work in very deed. (5.) The Lord hideth Himself; therefore His cause shall be destroyed, His work shall never be perfected ; His enemies shall never be overthrowen. (6.) The Lord hideth His face , and appeareth not; There-

fore our Salvation is desperat, and hopeless. These wrong Conclusions & the like are justly reprovab^{le}, & argue a wrong & perverse consideration of the Dispensations of the Lord, quite contradictory to the Truth here asserted; & therefore should be seriously guarded against, & such thoughts, when they enter the soul, & occupy the mind, should be rejected & dismissed with abhorrence, as temptations, and irrational and antievangelick suggestions of Satan.

Next, We may hence learne, how to answer, and with grounded reason repel the forementioned sinful Suggestions, & false Insinuations, when the Devil assaulteth us therewith, to trouble our Peace, marre our Joy, brangle our Hope, and weaken our Confidence; & thereby bring us, into a Fainting, Misbeleeving, Desponding and Heartless Disposition of Spirit: For whatever the outward dispensations of the Lord be, His Covenant stands fast, and His Covenant-relation abideth the same, and His heart and love abideth fixed and unchangable, His purposes alter not, His thoughts take place in all generations, how great so ever the difference be, betwixt the one and the other, as to His dispensations in them. And the fixed faith

The Lords deliverings are oft hid: 349

faith of this would prove a notable preservative against fainting and faithless fears, and would Strengthen, Support, and Uphold the heart, in the midst of all these contrary waves; this would be good & fast ground, whereon the soul may ride at anchor saifly, in the midst of all these stormes, and horrible tempests.

Thirdly, Hence we see the great advantage of the people of God, who have cut a covenant with the Lord (as the Scripture phrase is) and are become His, and have an interest in Him, as theirs; Let the Lord's dispensations outwardly be never so dark, and sad, and such as those, who are utter strangers to the Scriptures, and to the Lord's way of dealing with His people, would interpret to be manifest evidences, and demonstrations of God's off casting; yet they may sing with the Sweet Psalmist of Israel, and say, *Although mine house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow* 2 Sam. 23. 5. O how great is this advantage, that they may by faith read love in His heart, when anger seemeth to flow out of His hands? And that his Interest

in, and relation to His people, & theirs to Him againe, abideth firme and unshaken, notwithstanding of all the outward sore and sharpe passages of his providence. What Joy, Peace and Comfort may the thoughts of this yeeld unto His sad hearted people, when troubled, at the consideration of His sharpe dispensations?

Fourthly, Here is likewise great encouragement, and a strong motive to enduce and perswade unto a closing of a Covenant with God: And Oh, that all, who are as yet strangers hereunto, would at length be moved to lay hold on Him, while his armes are stretched out to welcome & embrace all, who will come.

Secondly, We may hence observe, That there is a discovery to be had of the standing relation betwixt God and His people, even when the Lord hideth Himself: For the Lord was now hiding Himself, or appearing as such unto the Prophet; and yet the Prophet saw him withall, to be the God of Israel, and the Saviour. In the former point, we saw, That the relation betwixt God and His people doth stand, notwithstanding of the Lords hiding of His face; and not appearing openly by acts, sutable to such a relation. But though

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 351

though this be so; yet His people may want the heart-confirming sight thereof. And now in this point, we hear, That His people may be helped unto this sight and discovery; even in such a day, wherein the Lord hideth Himself. And that.

1. When the Lord leadeth them in by Faith, to see His unchangeable Nature, Purposes and Decrees; as also his Truth, and unchangable Word; together with the other Particular grounds of this unchangableness in Gods Relations towards His people, formerly mentioned; the hand of God must lead them in to this secret chamber, where, discovering the Lord, and His way with His people, they see his heart abiding the same, however His face may frown, & robes may be in His hands. Now when faith getteth right apprehensions of God, and winneth to a right discovery of Him, they see this connexion, that otherwise would be dark and questionable; and they see a reality and subsistence in the promises.

2. The Lord helpeth them to see throw the dark cloud, and the black dispensation, and to read, what is written on the backside thereof; or what standeth behinde

behinde the courtine of the present sad dispensation : And then they discover Faithfulness and Unchangableness in God, & Love, Truth & Mercy in all his dispensations.

3. The Lord blunteth the edge of the temptations of Satan; and lets His Child see the unreasonableness of what is objected, & the absurdity of the Inference, that Satan and corrupt Reason would make, & draw from the Lords way of procedoure : Yea, he helpeth them to draw the contrary Conclusions, and that upon certaine & approven grounds, confirmed by manifold experience.

4. The Lord discovereth unto them the firm connexion betwixt these saddest and blakest Dispensations, and the faire Promises, and the noble Outgate, that is coming to His people : And then they cannot but see him to be Israel's God, even when He hideth Himself.

5. The Lord thinketh good sometime to give, in the darkest day, and in the darkest houre of the night, some glimpses of His glory, in behalfe of His People; to shew, that He is not altogether unmindful of them; that He is not far away; and that He is about His work, and carrying

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 353

rying it on to His glory, & to their good: And this confirmeth their faith in His abiding the same, whatever His dispensations be.

This should let us see, as upon the one hand, the great goodness and condescendency of God, who will lout down and help his weak people, who are desirous to fear him, and to walk honestly before him, in a dark day; and will set a prospect to their eye, whereby they may see, as *Moses* did from the top of *Pisgab*, the promised land, and that great ground of Joy and rejoycing, that the Lord hath not forsaken His people; so upon the other hand, it should point-out our duty, to wit, to be living nigh God, even while He is hiding Himself; and pursuing after an hid God; to the end, He may lead us, while we are in the dark, and hold us by our right hand, that we stagger not through unbeleef and fall; but may be helped, through his grace, to a sight of Him, as the God of His people, even when He hideth himself; whereby we should have many advantages. As

I. This sight of God, in such a day, as it would set us with earnestness to pray; so it would encourage us to continue instant

stant in prayer, knowing that the return would come in due time; seeing the Lords mind were not altered, His affections remained the same, & His relation to & Interest in His people was not changed; & therefore He would hear and helpe in due time.

2. This sight would strengthen the child of God unto all Patience in waiting, when he saw, that the Lord would come, and that the coming of the Lord drew nigh, he would waite, and stablish his heart in waiting, as the husband man waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth *Jam. 5: 7, 8.* And by this patience, as he would establish his heart, as this place of *James* sheweth, so he would possesse his soul *Luk. 21: vers 19.*

3. It would also strengthen, fortifie & confirme their hope: for faith, discovering this sight, would make the soul stretch its hands thorow the dark cloud, to grip the glorious promises, lying hid in the other side, and embrace them. Those worthies mentioned *Heb. 11.* though they did not receive the promises, yet having seen them a far off, & being perswaded of them, they are said to have embraced them *vers. 13.*

4. This

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 355

4. This would keep up their head, and cause them sing in hope, they would rejoyce in the midst of their Affliction; and notwithstanding of all the present and apparent impossibilities, in the way of the Lords return, & of recovering his work; they yet would rejoyce with joy unspeakable & full of Glory; because they would see, the Lord would come, *and subdue Nations, and loose the loins of Kings, and open the two leaved gates, and break in pieces the gates of brass; and cut asunder the bars of yron* Esai. 45: 1, 2.

But if it be said, When the Lord is not pleased to lead poor beleevvers, into these secrets, in a dark night; nor grant them the use of such a lanterne, whereby they may see their way; nor such a discovery of the grounds of the immutability of this Relation; what can poor beleevvers do in that case? The answer lyeth in that, which we may

Thirdly, Observe from these words of the Prophet, as pointing forth the duty of the people of God, in such a case, after the Prophets example; seeing for this end this is here set down, *to wit*, That in a day, wherein the Lord is hiding Himself, as to the way of bringing about the promised

promised salvation, and out-gate of His Church and People, it is the duty of all beleivers, to be asserting this Relation of the Lord's to, and interest in His Church and People, as their God and Redeemer; and to be closeing with Him and griping to Him, as such, let dispensations seem never so manifestly to speak out the contrary, & be never so discouraging to them, in that adventure: For we see the Prophet (and doubtless this was left on record, for our instruction, in the like case, and while under the same circumstances) even while he is beholding and considering God, as hiding Himself; laying hold upon Him, as Israels God, and as the Saviour; and asserting this as a Truth; to which he would stand, & which he would owne, let matters go as they would. This doth includethese things.

1. That in such a day, as this, which was mentioned, the People of the Lord, should look upon it, as their duty, to Professe, Declare, and Avow, that the Lord is Israels God, keeping fast His Relation; and Close with Him, Grip to to Him, Accept of Him, and Adhere to Him, as such.

2. That in such a day specified, they should

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 357

should certainly expect, that he will answer that Relation, and be indeed a Saviour: And Salvation should be looked for from Him alone, & none else; & from no other airth. *Thou art the Saviour.*

The first of these is manifest from these Particulars.

1. That no dispensation we meet with will warrand His people to have mistaking thoughts of Him; or to stand aback from laying hold on Him: For they are not sent for that end; but rather to drive them nigher to him, and to urge them to a more firme and fixed adhering to Him. Windy blasts will not cause us hold a more careless grip of our cloaks, but rather cause us hold them faster.

2. The darker the dispensation be, our need of holding Him fast is the greater; and so our call the more loud;

3. This is the way, to get the sanctified use of such Dispensations; and to win to the right improvement of them: And without this, we cannot carry aright under these and the like dispensations.

4. This is the proper season for Faith to bud and appear in, and to bring forth Fruit: And this is the native and kindly exercise of Faith, in such a day.

5. This

5. This is the only way to get a right frame of Spirit, under such a dispensation; and to carry as beleevers ought to do.

6. This is the only way to be kept stedfast, faithful, and unmovable, in that day of darkness; and without this, the soul is exposed to all the tempestuous onsets & blasts of the Enemy. Hereby only is the beleever kept fast anchored on the rock, that will not fail.

The *second* Note is likewise clear upon these grounds.

1. Because in such a dark day, Faith should be exercised, and that is the proper season, wherein faith should appear, and should grow; that is, as it were, the soil, wherein faith should bring forth fruit. When the knife was at the throat of *Isaak*, the Son of the promise, and the first and only sprout and appearance of that seed, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed; yet *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, beleeved, that God was Faithful and True, and would be his Salvation.

2. Thus the Lord is glorified, when, blow stormes as they will, and temptations to a despereing & desponding of heart, be never so multiplied, & motives to seek salvation
and

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 359

& an outgate by sinful and unlawful wayes and meanes, doubled; yet the soul is fixed, on Him, and on Him alone, and will say, *As shur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, — but in God alone, the fatherless finde his mercy* Hos. 14: 3.

All which may discover our sinful and unsutable frame, in such a dark day, when the Lord is, in **Glory and Majesty**, sutable to Himself, carrying on His work, out of our sight, and is hiding Himself, that we cannot see him, nor know what he is doing; so may it point forth our duty, and teach us, what to think, and what to do, in such a day. And to this end, we may hence learn in particular, to minde those duties following.

1. In such a day, wherein the Lord hideth Himself, we should beware of entertaining any jealous thoughts of Him: Satan will then be busie, to muster up all the Arguments and Grounds he can, to cause Beleevers, at least, turn jealous of God; and to doubt, if He will appear any more for Zion, to the end they may faint, and give over Faith and Hope; and then he hath gained his point; and Beleevers in such a day, may expect this, and feare their own hearts, that will be too ready

to comply with all Satans Motions and Suggestions : This therefore would be carefully guarded against.

2. In such a day, the unchangable Purposes of God , His faithful Word and Promises should be the subject of our Meditation ; on these should we dwell , and ruminare ; to the end , our heads may be kepted-up in hope , and we may not despond.

3. We should beware to make the day darker, by sinful departing from God , and by giving way to Satans Temptations : When folks in a dark night are walking among snares and pits , they will set down their feet with great warriness and circumspection : so should we do , in such a day, lest we make our Condition worse.

4. We should observe narrowly , what we can mark , in the Dispensations of the Lord , that will say and evince to us , according to the grounds of spiritual reasoning, that God is about His work ; and that , though we see Him not , yet He is working under ground , and carrying on His projects ; to the end , we may be confirmed in our hope , and strengthened to waite , with patience and faith.

5. We should minde our duty , whatever

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 36r

ever He do ; for that is it we are called to, and so much the rather, that the Lord hideth Himself, should we be diligent in unquestionable duties ; for *He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness* Esai. 64:v. 5.

6. We should beware to limite the holy One of Israel; let us rather stoup and adore, and acknowledge Him to be Jehovah, who doth what He will.

The *Third* thing considerable in these words of truth, is, what is imported by that word *Verily*: And it would seem, to point out to us these particulars following, which I shall but mention.

First, That it is no light, or easie matter, to win to the faith, and to the sight of this by faith, That God is the Lord, and the God of Israel, and the Saviour, when He hideth Himself: For this ejaculation seemeth to have been, or is so here expressed, as if it had been the issue and result of some great inward wrestling, out of which, when the Prophet getteth up his head, he cryeth out, *Verily thou art a God, that hidest thyself,* &c. And considering, the frame of our heart by Nature, and the subtilty
Q of

of Satan, and his skill and diligence to muster up all Considerations, in such a day, to our disadvantage, this difficulty cannot but be great.

Secondly, That this truth is of great moment, being here confirmed by such an asseveration: It is a truth, useful, and necessary to be beleaved and fixed in the heart: For it is attended with great advantages, and the want of the faith of it, is not only sinful, but most hurtful and dangerous; being accompanied with many sad evils, and being the cause of dreadful effects and consequences.

Thirdly, That this Truth should be fixed, in our hearts, as a great and fundamental point, and put beyond all doubt, or dispute with us, that *He is a God, that hideth Himself, the God of Israel, and the Saviour*.

The *Last* Particular here considerable, is the Prophets uttering this Matter to God, and speaking thus to Him, *Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself &c.* Which pointeth forth to us these things.

First, The sincerity and uprightness of heart, in the Prophet, who could thus speak unto God, and lay the matter before Him, as it was; Which should teach us to be

The Lords deliverings are oft hid. 363

be honest, sincere, and upright in all our carriage, free of deceit and hypocrisie.

Secondly, The reality of this his Exercise, and outgate; for it was no made and supposed thing, but real: To teach us so to carry.

Thirdly, That the Prophets heart was more warmed unto God, and that this was the result of his exercise, in his meditations, that his heart was drawn nigher unto God; for now he uttereth the matter, in the very bosome of the Father. It is well, when our exercises have this issue and outgate.

Fourthly, His open Profession of this matter, was to exalt and glorify God; for herein is a piece of solemne worship performed unto God; which pointeth forth our duty, in the like case.

Q²

CON-

CONSIDERATION XXI.

**No man can make straight
what God hath made
crooked.**

ECCLES. VII: V. 13.

*Consider the Work of God; for who can
make that straight, which He hath
made crooked?*

IN a day, wherein the People of God are persecuted and afflicted for His sake and cause, it were a great help and advantage unto a christian and sutable carriage under that dispen'sation, to have right and sutable thoughts of God, and of His diuine works. In such a day, we fancie and imagine many things amiss, in the Providential Workings of God, many things we think we see, that might be helped, and if we had the disposal of matters, in our hand, should be quickly redressed; and thus being led away with our own proud hearts, and insensibly carried down the strame, we fall a censuring of the holy Way of the Lord, and a quarrelling with Him, because He doth not rectifie

work can no man make straight. 365

etifie matters, according to our mind, and doth not governe the world, or, at least, the Church, according to our wishings and wouldings. Now because this frame of spirit is so repugnant unto the Holy Will of God, so unfutable unto the Children of God, so hurtful un'o the Soul, and such an Enemie unto the right deportment of Soules. in the day of Crosses and Affliction, it will be of use to to speak some thing (if the Lord will help) to rectifie our mistakes, and to cure us of these Distempers.

We think we see many crooked Passages, in God's Way and Dispensations with the Church, and with ourselves in particular; and we imagine also, we know wayes how to set all these crook even; But this is really a clear demonstration of our follie: For the Wise man telleth us here, that no man can help any thing, that they suppose God hath made amisse; or make any thing straight, which God hath made crooked, *who can (saith he) make that straight, which He hath made crooked?*

Among severall other wholesome Instructions, which *Salomon* giveth us, in this penitential discourse of his, this is one. That we would Consider the Work of God, that is, Take notice of what He is doing and working, ponder upon His works, Me-

366 Confid. II. God's work

dictate upon them, and dwell on the thoughts thereof, and lay to heart His Providential disposal of all Things, Actions and Events; and His ordering and manning of them all to His own Glory, and according to His own mind and absolute will and pleasure: And that so, as to acquiesce in what He doth, to rest satisfied with it, and to comply heartily and cheerfully therewith, in all points, without Murmuring, Fretting, Repining or Quarrelling. And He addeth a Reason; (which is that we are here mainly to speak to;) *for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?* This question is an emphatick negation of the thing; and is as much, as if he had said, it is absolutely Impossible, that any Creature, Man or Angel, can make straight, what God hath made crooked. They cannot Counter-work the Lord; they cannot undo what He hath done; they cannot amend what they suppose is made or done amisse.

This He had said before Chap 1: vers. 15. *that which is crooked cannot be made straight.* And here He maketh this Improvement of it, and as it were draweth this use from it; That we should consider the Works of the Lord; as if He had said, The Consideration of this, that no man can make any thing straight, that they suppose God hath

work can no man make straight. 367

hath made crooked, should move us to comply with, and contentedly acquiesce in whatsoever God doth under the Sun, by His mighty Power, and according to His unchangable Purpose and Counsel, and to the everlasting determinations of His holy will.

These words give ground to enquire

1. What are those crooked things, which God hath made?

2. How and why it is, that these crooked things cannot be made straight by one or other of the Creatures?

3. What way we should, upon this account, Consider the Works of God? or what Improvement we should make of this Impossibility of helping, what we suppose is amisse, in the Lord's Works of Providence?

As to the first, VVe may not suppose, that, to speak properly, any thing, that God doth, is crooked; but our corrupt unsatisfied mindes look upon many passages of God's All-ruling and All-disposing Providence, as crooked, and as such as we would faine have altered, if we had our wills. Some of which we can onely mention, and these we may reduce to two Heads,

1. Touching some things, that are more controverted.

Q 4.

2. Touching

2. Touching some things, that are less controverted.

As to the more controverted, we shall mention only these following,

1. Not only do our hearts rise up against the Holy and Sovereigne Acts of Gods will, in choosing whom He would unto eternal Life, and in passing by others; as we see *Rom. 9.* Corrupt Reason, that will not submit unto the Lord and His wayes, spurneth against that saying, that God hath mercy on whom He will; and *Jacob* have I loved &c. *Vers. 13, 15.* and respondenteth against God, objecting, upon this account, unrighteousness unto the just and holy One of Israel *V. 14.* But also against His holy Executions of these His Holy and Sovereigne Decrees. Paul had concluded, that God had mercy on whom He would, and hardened whom He would *Vers. 18.* And corrupt Reason will againe carp, and say, *If so, why doth He yet finde fault? For who hath resisted His will? Vers. 19.* Unto which the Apottle must returne a sharp and silenceing answer, *Vers. 20, 21, 22, 23.* Nay, but O Man, who art thou, that repliest (or disputest) against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hast not the Potter power over the Clay, of the same lump; to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? &c.

2. So

work can no man make straight. 369

2. So in the matter of the Lord's dispensing the meanes of grace, and the Gospel, we wonder at the Lords Way, and cannot understand how it is, that He should hide this Mysterie from Ages and Generations *Col. 1. vers. 26. Ephes 3: v. 9.* should send the Gospel to one place, and not unto another; and why He should forbid the Apostles to goe preach the good newes of Salvation in *Asia* and in *Bithinia* *Act. 16: vers. 6, 7,* Why He should continue the Gospel long with one people, and remove it quickly from another, and Non-church them: And why one Nation and People should enjoy the meanes of grace for many ages; and others, for many ages, never once have a report of Salvation through Christ, but be left, from one generation to another, in blackness of darkness, in woful Idolatry and Ignorance. This piece of the Lord's work seemeth so crooked, and so unlike to, and incorrespondent with, or repugnant to the attributes of God, as to His Mercy, Loving Kindness and Goodness, unto some, that they, to make up this supposed gap, and set right this crook in the Lords way, feigne and imagine an Universal Objective Grace; or an Universal Gospel; that is, that God hath given to all Nations, how barbarous so ever, those meanes of Grace and Salvation,

370. Confid. 21. Gods crooked

which, if they would improve aright, would prove saving; and so must imagine, that the Sun, Moon and Stars, Raines and fruitful Seasons, and other works of Creation and Providence, do preach out that Mysterie of Salvation through a crucified Christ, contrare to Scripture, and to all Sense and Reason; or that there is another way to Salvation, than by faith in a crucified Christ: which is also contrare to the Scripture *Act. 4: vers, 12.* Thus the *Arminians*, and *Semi-Arminians* and *Quakers*, think to make this crooked work of God straight; but invaine. We should rather minde that, which *Paul* hath *Rom. 11: 33.* after he had spoken of the rejection of the Jewes, and the Lord taking in the Gentiles, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out! Vers. 34. For who hath known the minde of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellour? Vers. 35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him againe? Vers. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* And minde the purpose of God here, *Ephes. 1: v. 8, 9, 10.* and *3: 9, 10, 11.*

3. The way of the Lord, in this matter, seemeth so crooked to *Pelagians*, and their fol.

work can no man make straight. 391

followers, *Arminians*, *Socinians* and *Quakers* with *Papists* and *Jesuites*, that all this contrivance of an *Universal Objective Grace*, or an *Universal Gospel*, will not satisfie them, nor be enough, in their apprehensions, to set this crook even; but they must further assert an *Universal Subjective Grace*; that is, Grace and Power granted to every One, to hearken to the voice of God calling in Nature, and in the Gospel, to convert and turne themselves, to believe and repent, if, and whensoever they will; because they see not, how it is consistent with Gods Wisdom and Goodness, to require any duty of man, but what he giveth him full ability to performe, not regarding the stock of strength, that was once given to man, and was dilapidat by *Adam*. But, as to this, how crooked so ever we suppose it to be, we must rest here, that the *Carnal mind is enmity against God*; for it is not subject to the *Law of God*, neither indeed can be *Rom. 8: vers. 7*. And that the *natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned *1 Cor. 2: v. 14*. and that *Faith is the gift of God*. *Ephes. 2: v. 8*. And that it is *God that worketh in us both to will and to do*, according to his own good pleasure *Phil. 2: vers. 13*. And that *Christ is a Prince exalted to give Repentance*.

Q. 6.

penance. *Act. 5: v. 30* And that God is a free Dispenser of His grace, as being obliged to none, and shewing mercy to whom he will.

4. That work of the Lord's covenanting with *Adam*, as the Head, in the name of all mankind; and his imputing his sin unto his posterity, who were in his loines, so that all become borne and conceived in sin, and obnoxious to the wrath of God, because of that transgression of *Adam*, according as the Apostle speaketh *Rom 5 vers. 12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entr dinto the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And againe Vers. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adams transgression. And Vers. 18. Therefore as by one mans offence (or by one offence) judgment came upon all men to condemnation. This Dispensation, I say, seemeth so crooked to some, such as Pelagians, Socinians, Arminians and Quakers; that they must absolutely deny it; and say, there is no such thing as original sin, though *Paul* saith *Ephej. 2: vers 3. — that we were by nature (including himself) the Children of wrath. And David* telleth us, in his humble Confession of sinne to God *Psal. 51 ver. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my**

work can he man make straight. 373

my Mother conceive me. And Job sayeth Chap. 14: v. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.* And to the same purpose Bildad Job. 25: v. 4. ——— *How can he be clean that is borne of a Women?*

5. For further setting even, what other-
wayes men think crooked, in the way of
the Lord, they imagine, assert and defend
an Universal Redemption; saying, that
Christ hath died for all; equally, say some;
with some difference, say others: because
it seemeth a crooked thing with them, and
inconsistent with the Nature and Goodness
of God, not to seek the Salvation of all,
and not to prepare meanes of life for all, &
so not to send Christ to die for all and every
mothers son; though we be plainly enough
and expressly told in Scripture, that the Fa-
ther gave not all to the Son to redeem, but
some; and that Christ laid down His life a
ransome for those alone, who were given to
him to save, and of whom he must give an
account to the Father, as having undertaken
to redeem them from Hell, Wrath, Satan
and all their Enemies; and by His Power,
and Grace to bring them saife home at
length, as being their Head, their Hus-
band, their Shepherd, their Cautioner,
their Lord Ransomer, their Intercessour,
and Advocat with the Father; and that

Q 7 these

these are an *alls* and called the *world*, to point out their natural Original, that Grace may the more appear to be grace; and to point out their being scattered through the world, and taken out of all Kindreds, Tongues, Nations, People, Languages; especially now under the Gospel, in distinction from the dayes of the Old Testament, when the *Jawes* were only the peculiar people of the Lord, and in *Judah* only was God known, and his name great in *Israel*.

6 Further to make God's supposed crooked wayes straight, the Enemies of the free Grace of God imagine, that the will of Man must be left Free, to be Lord of all, and absolute disposer of the decrees and purposes of God of Redemption, and of Salvation; so that the Lord must not by an Irresistible Power draw any home to Christ, contrary to *Iob. 6: 44*. Nor create in any a new heart, and take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh, contrare to *Ezech. 11: 19*. and *36: 26, 27*. Because they cannot see, how it can consist with Gods Love to mankind, to preferre one to another; they imagine that God layeth the matter alike to all mens door, standing equally and knocking at every mans door; and so leaving it to them alike to choose or refuse.

to become happy or miserable, as they please; and so they say, that when God hath done all He can or will do, to save people, their will is at perfect freedom to accept or reject the Grace of God, and that there is no special saving work of grace upon the heart of one, more then of another. O what real crooked work do foolish men make here! How do they darken, deform and make crooked the glorious straight work of the free grace of God, wherein absolute Sovereignty, glorious Grace, and the free Mercy of God shineth forth with such a Sovereigne Lustre, Beauty and Glory? Paul had other thoughts of the matter, when he said Ephes. 1: vers. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Celestials, in Christ; according as he hath chosen us, in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the Glory of his grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved Son.

7. To save this same Diana of Free will, the same Persons do deny the Free and Absolute Decrees of God, touching any thing

to be done by Man, whether good or evil; because they cannot see, how God's Absolute Decrees, concerning this or that, can consist with the free Actings of mans will, & not impose an absolute necessity on man to do, or not to do, according to what is decreed; as the stone must absolutely and naturally move down-ward, and the Sun shine, and all Natural causes act and work; therefore to make this supposed crook straight, they see no other way, but to deny all such Decrees, and Purposes in God; not knowing, that as God's decrees determine the event, so they determine the manner of the events falling out; that Natural Causes shall produce such an event naturally and necessarily; and Free and Contingent Causes shall inevitably produce such an effect, but freely and contingently, according to their Nature: as that the *Jewes* should kill Christ, and do what they did against him; but yet through no necessity of nature, but freely and of their owne accord, out of malice and enmity; as also that the souldiers should pierce Christ's side, and not break a bone of Him, and all that most freely, without any compulsion, or constraint upon their wils: Whereby we might see, if we were compliant with the holy Will, & Workings of God, that the decrees

of.

work can no man make straight. 377

of God are so far from everting & destroying the Liberty of the will of man, that, on the contrary, they establiſh, & confirme the ſame. But let men imagine it to be never ſo crooked, we muſt hold by this, That God did from all eternity freely & unchangeably ordaine whatſoever comes to paſſe, even the moſt contingent things *Aſt.* 2: 23. *Eccl.* 4: 27, 28. *Prov* 16: 23.

8. So to make the wayes of God ſtraight and even, which otherwiſe men imagine would be crooked, Some, as our *Quakers*, with others, imagine that People may be ſaved, that never heard of Chriſt, by yeelding Obedience to the law and light of Nature, or by following the guide of the works of Creation and Providence, or a Light within them, as they ſpeak: But what their condition is, who are without Chriſt, the Scripture ſufficiently ſheweth *Ephes.* 2: 12. — *they are ſtrangers from the Covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.* And that the light of Nature can onely helpe to make Perſons without excuſe *Rom.* 1: 20.

But paſſing theſe and the like, which are mater of controverſie, let us mentione ſome others of God's works, which men ſuppoſe to be crooked: As

1. When it is as *Eccleſ.* 8: 14. *There be juſt men*

men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and againe there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the righteous; that is, when as to the outward things in the world, it is just otherwise as we would think should be; the wicked prosper, and their eyes stand out with fatness, they increase in riches, and have more then they could wish, they are not in trouble, nor plagued as other men, and there are no bands in their death, as it is *Psal. 37: 3, 4, 5, 12.* And upon the other hand, the Godly man he is oppressed with Poverty and Affliction, plagued all the day, chastened every morning. This was such a rugged and uneven path, that the honest Man of God *Asaph* could not hold his feet in it; but was like to fall and break his neck, concluding that it was in vaine to minde piety; verily (said he *vers. 13.*) *I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in Innocency.* And such a crook was this, that he could not get it fet straight, till he went into the sanctuary of God *vers. 17:* This mistake made *Jobs* friends go so wilde, in their reasonings against him; and to conclude him an hypocrite, because he met with such hard outward dispensations at the hands of the Lord; for they could not see, how God should deal with a Godly man, as He dealt with *Job*; that was so crooked

work can no man make straight. 379

crooked a piece of work, that they thought God would never have made it. But Job understood the matter otherwise, and told them Chap. 9: 22. *This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.* So Ch. 12: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. he enlargeth upon this theme:

2. When it is as Eccles. 4: 1. *So I returned and considered all the oppressions, that are done under the Sun, and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.* That is, when the innocent are oppressed in their Name, Goods, Rights, and Person, and made to cry out bitterly because of their oppression; and yet have none to take their part, or helpe them, or speak comfortably unto them; nor power to helpe and relieve themselves: but on the contrary, their oppressing enemies have power and might enough, to bear them more downe, & oppresse them. This seemeth a crooked piece of work, and yet the Lord hath so ordered matters, that it is oft so with the innocent. We see what Job was made to say Chap. 6: 14. *To him that is Afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty, 11. my Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, as the streams of brooks they passe away.* And How
Hab.

382 Confid. 11. Gods crooked.

Habbakuk looked upon this *Chap. 1: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.* Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man, that is more righteous than he? And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them &c. This seemeth to many to be a very crooked passage of Providence, and they think, the judge of the whole earth should order matters otherwise, and not a few are stumbled hereat, and tempted to think, that God hath forsaken the earth.

3. When it is as *Eccles. 7: 15.* ——— there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness; and there is a wicked man, that longeth his life, in his wickedness. This seemeth also a crooked passage in the Lord's way & Work, to many, who look upon the Lord and his way and working with eyes of flesh. How oft hath it thus fallen out? Honest *Naboth*, experienced this *1 King. 21.* So did *Joh Baptist*, when he was so basely and unworthily cut off, and that in his righteousness. So also the Martyres of the Lord, in all ages. Honest *Jeremiah* thought this a secret, that he could not be satisfied in, and a ground whereupon he would go plead with God *Chap. 12.*

4. Yea

work can no man make straight. 381

4. Yea, when it is but as Eccles. 9: v. 2. 3. it seemeth crooked to many, who would have a visible difference in external things, alwayes put betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked. And yet we see the Wise Mans Observation was, that no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. *All things (saith he) come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As the good, so the sinner; he that sweareth as he that feareth an Oath. This is an evil among all things, that are done under the Sun, that there is one event unto all.* Our carnal Reason would think, that God should so rule and governe the world, as that all might be in case to observe a palpable difference betwixt the Godly, and the Wicked, even in external things: But we will not get made straight, what God hath thus made crooked.

5. So it seemeth crooked to some, that it is oft times with men, as was observed by Salomon, Eccles. 9: v. 11. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battel to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skil, but time and chance happeneth them all:* But things fall out quite otherwise, than men would have

have expected, or hoped: And though herein appeareth a beautiful over ruling hand of Providence, controlling mens Projects, Designes and Forecastings, and disappointing them of their hopes, and of what they promised themselves, and made account to be sure of; because of their wise contrivance and managment of their work unto that end, yet our carnal Reason would think, it should be otherwayes, and that our paines labour and wise Contrivances should not be in vaine; that *David*, when he had made such preparation for building of the House of God, should not misse of his great desire and wish. But our seeing of crooks in this straight All-ruling and All-disposing providence, doth but proclame our blindness.

6. Our carnal heart would oft times think, that it is a wonderful crook in the Providence of God, that he should suffer sin to be in the world, which doth so much dishonour him, and causeth so much trouble and evil, unto all, when he may and can well hinder it. We oft wonder, why the Lord should have suffered *Adam* to fall, and bring himself and all his posterity into such a sea of misery, yea and the whole creation almost; seeing he might have kept him, as he did the confirmed Angels; And we
are

work can no man make straight. 383

are ready to think, that it had been better, if sin had not entered into the world ; and thus account this passage of the Lords Providence to be a crooked thing. And we are ready to wonder that the Lord suffers wicked persons to live so long to dishonour Him, and commit more wickedness, and that He doth not presently cut them off, or at least restrain them, as He might do, a thousand wayes. As also that he should judicially harden their hearts ; as he did the heart of Pharaoh, that so they may commit more sin, and beleieve a lye, as 2 Thes. 2: vers. 11, 12. and not obey the voice of the Lord, as Esai 6: v. 9, 10. Rom. 11. v. 8 Act. 28: 26. Mat. 13: v. 14. Mark. 4: v. 12: Luk. 8: 10. Job. 12: v 40. But if our eyes were opened, and if we were spiritual, we would see a beautiful straightness, where now we think there is a crook.

7. The Dispensations of the Lord, in and about His Church, do oft times seem crooked to us, when we consult with carnal Reason. As

(1.) It seemeth not straight to us, that His Dispensations should so contradict (1.) His Promises, (2.) The Hopes and Expectations of His People. And (3.) Their Prayers, Desires and Wrestlings. We oft think it should be otherwayes ; and so allaige

384 Confid. 27. Gods crooked

allaike that there is a crook and a palpable unevenness in the Way of the Lord.

(2.) It seemeth crooked to us, that His Church should be so kept under, and oppressed by wicked men; and persecuted for His sake, and for the truths sake, and should be still, as a bush all in fire: For we would think, that God should keep His own peculiar Kingdom, and his own Flock free from the Oppression & Tyranny of Oppressing Enemies: Hence we finde, that His People have put up many times a complaint concerning this. See *Psal. 44: vers. 12.* and *60: vers. 3.* and *94: v. 5* *Dan. 9: vers. 16.*

(3.) And that this trouble should not be for a short time, like a Summer showr, that soon bloweth over; but almost her constant lot from her youth *Psal. 129: vers. 1, 2.* so that her lucide intervals, and sun-blains are but short, and she is hardly well out of one tryal, while she is in the midst of another.

(4.) So it seemeth crooked, that this trouble should not be light, but very sad and sharpe; the Enemies should make long their furrowes *Psal. 129: v. 3.*

(5.) That she should not have one enemy to deal with, but many, both together and successively. The Tabernacles of Edom and the

work can no man make straight. 385

the *Ismaelites*, of *Moab* and the *Hagarens*, *Gedál* and *Ammon* and *Amaleck*, the *Philistines*, with the Inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Assure* *Psal* 83: 6, 7, 8.

(6.) That the Lord should not hear or regard the Prayers & Cryes of His peoples; but should rather be angry at their Prayer. *Psal.* 80: 4.

(7.) That the Lord should seem so inexorable, that he would not grant the suits of his special favourites, and such as have prevailed with Him at other occasions; interceeding in their behalfe, such as *Moses* and *Samuel Jer.* 15: 1. and *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job Ezech.* 14: 14, 20.

(8.) That the Lord should suffer these wicked enemies to overturne all His own work; break downe the carved work & pluck up the vine, which His own right hand hath planted. As *Psal.* 80: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to burne up all the Synagogues of God in the Land; cast fire into the sanctuary &c. *Psal.* 74: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7. Yea and blaspheme His own name *vers.* 10. See *Psal.* 44.

8. There are also several things, in the Lord's Dispensations with His own people in particular, that seem to us many times crooked: As

R

(1.) We

386 **Confid. 21. Gods crooked**

(1.) We think that He should never hide his face from his owne faithful ones ; and that they should never be made to cry out with *Job Chap 13: 24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy ?* and as *David Psalm 10. vers 1. and 30. vers 7.*

(2.) Or if He contend against them, He should shew them wherefore, and not put them to complaine of this , as *Job* was, who said *Iob 10: 2. — Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.*

(3.) We think it strange and uncouth , that the Lord should shew himself terrible unto them, as to *Heman Psal. 88.* who was distracted with the terroure of God , and to *Iob. Chap. 7: vers 13, 14, 15. & 9: 34. & 6: 4.*

(4) We are ready to think , that such should never be under Cloudes , Fears , Darknes, sad Apprehensions, & Doubts concerning their state and condition, *Esaï. 50: 10.* But that alwayes they should enjoy light, and see their happy condition.

(5.) We think that the work of grace in His people should never meet with a stop , far less with any decay ; but that they should be still flourishing like the palmie tree,

work can no man make straight. 387

tree, and growing like a Cedar in Lebanon.

(6.) So we think, that they should be free, all their dayes, of the trouble or at least of the prevailing power of corruption; we think, that enemy should never assault us any more, or molest our quarters: We think it strange, that these servants should ever come to ride upon horses, in our souls; and that His people should be made to cry out with *Paul Rom. 7: 24. Woe is me miserable man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.*

(7.) We think it also strange, that they should have so little rest from Satan, and from his inward hellish Injections, tending to Atheisme. Infidelity, Blasphemy and all Profanity: Seemeth not that dispensation somewhat crooked, that *Paul* met with, after he was taken up to the third heaven? *Cor. 12: 7?*

(8.) It seemeth many times uncouth to us, that His people have so many sad and bitter houres; & that they are so far from enjoying Comfort, Joy and Delight, & from that life of rejoyceing in the Lord continually, which is allowed to them, and they are called to; that their life is nothing almost but a continual complaint;

sometimes compleining of the Hardness of their heart, Blindness, Weakness, Impotency, Treachery, &c. sometimes of the weight of Duties, and of their Failings and Shortcomings; sometimes of the prevailling of Corruption and of the power of Temptation &c.

These and the like dispensations of the Lord, in and about his Saints, seem to themselves & to others sometimes crooked, and very unstraight; and as they wish it were otherwayes; so they suppose it would be more glorious and honourable to the Lord, if it were otherwise.

Thus it appeareth, how many things God hath made crooked, to our apprehensions: But now, who shall, who can make these crooked things straight? This is the *Second Particular*, in the words, That what God hath made crooked no man can make straight, with all his Wisdom, or Power, or by all the meanes he can use or devise; for *that which is crooked cannot be made straight Eccles. 1: 15. I know* (said the wise man Eccles. 3: 14.) *that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it. When He giveth quietness* (said *Elihu Job 34: 29,*) *who then can make trouble; or when*

work can no man make straight. 382

when He bideth his face, who then can behold him? Whether against a Nation, or a Man only?

And the reason is manifest, because

1. He is Unchangeable, and hath fixed all upon Eternal, and Immutable Purposes. *He is the Lord, he changeth not* Mal. 3: v. 6. *With him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning* Iam. 1: 17. He doth all things after the Counsel of His owne will *Ephes* 1. 11. taking Counsel of none *Rom.* 11: v. 34. *Esaï.* 40: 13, 14. His Counsel hath an immutability *Heb.* 6: 17.

2. He is Almighty; and who can juggle with Him, and put Him to take new Resolutions? *He is in one minde* (said *Iob* Ch. 23: 13. *and who can turn Him? And what His Soul desireth, that doth He.* So *Psal* 115: v. 6. *He hath done whatsoever he pleased. I know* (said the Psalmist *Psal.* 135: 5, 6.) *that Iehovah is great, and that our Iehovah is above all Gods, whatsoever the Lord please that did He, in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.* So *Iob* tells us Chap 9. 4. *He is wise in heart and mighty in strength. who hath hardened himself against him, & hath prospered? So vers. 12. Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, what dost thou?*

3. He is Absolute and-Soveraigne, to

R3 over

390 Confid. 21. Gods crooked

do what he will, as the Potter is absolute over the clay Ier. 18: 6. Rom. 9: 10. Eſai. 45: 9. And he is uncontrollable: Who can call him to an account? Who can ſay unto him, what doſt thou? Iob. 9: 12. He giueth not account of any of his matters Iob. 33: vers 13. For he is greater then men verſ. 12.

4. All his wayes are done in Wiſdom, and all his works Pſal. 104: 24. & 136: 5. And there is no wiſdome againſt the Word Prov. 21: 30. He hath eſta bliſhed the world by His wiſdom Ier. 10: 12. & 51: 7. 15. He is mighty in ſtrength and wiſdom Iob 3: 6: 5. And what then can fooliſh man, that is like a wilde aſſes colt, do? With the Ancient is wiſdom (ſaid Iob Chap. 12: 12, 13, 14. &c. and in length of dayes underſtanding: With him is wiſdom and ſtrength: he hath Counſel & underſtanding: and thence inferreth, Bebold he breaketh down, and it cannot be built againe, he ſhuteth up a man, & there can be no opening &c. See further to the end of that Chap.

5. All his works are perfect Pſal. 18: vers 30. And then, what can be added to them, or taken from them to amende them? What is perfect cannot be made better, or amended, one way, or other. What we then think and account to be crooked, is Perfect, Straight and Even, and contributeth.

work can no man make straight. 391

buteth to make up this compleat perfection of the whole.

6. There are Depths and unseen Mysteries in the work and wayes of the Lord, that we cannot search, and ignorance of which causeth the sinstruous Apprehensions, that we have of them: And how shall we think to amende that, which we do not understand? His works are great, sought out of all them, that have pleasure therein His works are honourable, glorious, & wonderful Psal. 118: 2, 3, 4. Then I beheld (said the wise man, Eccles. 8: ver. 17.) all the work of God, that a man cannot finde out the work that is done under the sun: Because though a man labour to seek it out; yea further, though a wise man seek to know it, yet shall he not be able to finde it. And againe Chap. 11: v. 5. As thou knowest not, what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow, in the womb of her, that is with childe; even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.

The consideration of which should first cause us sorrow, and mourne before the Lord, for our seeking to amend Gods work, as if we could make straight, what God hath made crooked, and set all things in a righter posture, than God hath done. Concerning which, we would 1. Take no-

R. 5

rice

392 Confid. 21. Gods crooked

vice of some of these wayes, whereby we are attempting this vaine work. And 2. Take notice of the evil of this sin.

As to the *First*. We are seeking to make straight what God hath made crooked, when

1. We are in a quarrelling humore Disputing with God, and Condemning him in our minds, for what he is doing; and Justifying ourselves in our Anger and Displeasure against the Dispensations, and Wayes of the Lord, as did *Jonah*; who was displeased exceedingly & very angry, that the Lord spared *Ninive Chap. 3: v. 10.* with 4: v. 1. And when the Lord said unto him *Chap. 4: vers 4. Doest thou well to be angry?* was not for all that satisfied: and againe *vers 9.* when the gourd was withered, and the East winde blew, and the sun beat upon his head, he fell againe in this distemper; and when the Lord said unto him, the second time, *doest thou well to be angry?* he answered, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.*

2. When our vaine Ratiocinations are engaged against the wayes of the Lord, in one particular or other; and we have this or that, to object against that course, which the Lord taketh; as if we would
impute

work can no man make straight. 393

impute iniquity unto our Maker; and accuse Him of unrighteous dealing: As those whom Paul bringeth-in reasoning against the truth of God, and saying Rom 9: 19.

——— *Why doth he yet finde fault? For who hath resisted his will?* To whom he answereth Vers. 20, 21. Nay, but o man, who art thou, that (answerest againe, or disputest against God, or) *repliest against God, &c.* As if he had said, Hath not the Lord Power and Sovereignty, in that matter, to do what he will; as well as a Potter hath over a bit clay? May not God dispose of His Clay, which he made Himself, as well as the Potter may do of the Clay, which he made not, and is not the Creator of; but was created to his hand, by the same God, that created himself? Why then dost thou quarrel with Him, or disputest against Him? Canst thou help the matter? Canst thou make that straighter, than it is?

3. When we corrupt the truthes of God, and abuse them, perverting them to our corrupt and licentious Ends, like that saying Rom. 6: vers. 1. *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* And againe Vers. 15. *Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace?* And Chap. 7:

R 4. v. 7.

394 **Confid. 11. God's crooked**

v. 7. *Is the Law sin?* So *Chap. 3: v. 31.* Do we then make void the Law through faith? These and the like Objections, which Paul, in his Epistles, preoccupieth, shew what the corrupt heart and reasonings of men are set upon; and how prone they are to turne the Grace of God into lasciviousness, and to pervert the right Wayes of the Lord. Whereby they clearly demonstrate, how displeased they are at the holy Truths and Wayes of God, and how ready to thraw and pervert them, that they may become more straight, then they seem to them at present to be.

4. When we Fret, Repine, Grumble and Grudge in our minde, against any of the Lords Dispensations in and about us, or our concernments. This was the great sin of *Israel*, they murmured against the Lord, and against *Moses*, *Exod. 15;* and *16,* and *17.* *Numb. 14,* and *16,* and *17.* *1 Cor. 10: 10.* They were dissatisfied in their mindes, and repined and murmured against the Lord; and hereby they said, they would have the wayes and dispensations of the Lord altered towards them: they were crooked, and they would have them made more straight.

5. When our hearts do not sweetly comply

comply with the Wayes and Dispensations of the Lord , or we learne not, nor study Christian Submission. We should submit ourselves unto the Lord , Iam. 4: vers. 7. and humble ourselves under his mighty hand 1Pet. 5: v. 6. We should be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits. Heb. 12. vers. 9. even when he Crosseth , Chastneth and Afflicteth us. But when we forget this Christian Duty , we declare our displeasure, at Gods wayes and dealings with us ; and say , that we would have his work amended, and that made straight , which He hath made crooked.

6. When we are Impatient , and cannot waite Gods leasure , but take sinful courses to deliver ourselves ; or sit down discontented , and sinfully longe for an outgate; then we declare our dissatisfaction with Gods way , and would have his dispensations altered, and matters running in another channel : As when the labouring man would have the day of harvest the next week after the seed is cast into the ground , he is displeased with Gods Order and Appointment of some Moneths interveening : Whileas we should have Patience , and waite Gods time with Pa-

tience, *Iam.* 5: 7, 8. *Luk.* 8: 15. 2 *Pet.* 1: v. 6. *Iam.* 1; 4. *Rom.* 12: 12.

7. When we are discontented with our own lot, and grudge at others, as having a better lot, than we have: an evil, which *James* condemneth *Iam.* 5: vers. 9. and which plainly sayeth, we would amend Gods work, and set straight what He hath made crooked. As that wicked King was displeased, when he heard the message of the Lord *1 Kings* 20: 42, 43.

8. When we are excessively Anxious and Disquieted in our minde, as to any passage of Providence, that we meet with, or as to any crosse that befalleth us. *David* checketh his own-soul, as to this *Pf.* 42: vers. 5, 11. and 43: 5. saying *Why art thou disquieted within me?* We are discharged to be careful thus with a sinful anxiety for any thing *Phil.* 4: v. 6. *1 Cor.* 7: 32. But When we are thoughtful, we clearly say, that we would faine make straight, what God hath made crooked, though Christ hath told us, *Matth.* 6: 27. that by taking thought, we cannot add one cubite to our stature.

9. When, though we dar not speak against God, in sending a crosse upon us; yet we are not satisfied with the Manner,

or

work can no man make straight. 397

or Measure, or Season, or Duration and Continuance, or the Instrument of our crosse; but say, we would choose any other crosse but this: we would be satisfied, if it were not so Bitter, and so Heavy and so Insupportable: we would have taken it well, had it come upon us at any other time; than now: we would most chearfully have borne it, if it had been of shorter Continuance: and had any other person been the Instrument thereof, we would have laid our hand upon our mouth: all which and the like, though they seem to insinuate some sort of Submission; yet are plaine Declarations, that we think the way of the Lord crooked, and that we would have matters better ordered, and all things made more straight and even, than they are.

10. When in our prayers, there is not that submission unto the holy and soveraign Will of the Lord, that ought to be; but rather a limiteing of the holy One of Israel: and a sinful unwarrantable Importunity, as to things not necessary; in themselves, nor for us, without submission of soul unto the holy Will of the Lord, as to the Manner, Time and Measure of the Lords granting of our suites:

R 7

when

When our Prayers are not commensurate unto the Promises, as to their Substance; nor put up with Submission to God's Will and Sovereignty, as to the Manner, Measure, Season, Way, and the like circumstances, which the great God hath kepted in His own hand.

By these and the like wayes, we declare our dissatisfaction with the wayes and works of God, and account them crooked, and think and endeavoure (though in vaine) to make straight, what God hath made crooked: An evil at which God is highly displeased. *Wo unto him* (saith the Prophet *Esai. 45: vers 9, 10.*) *that striveth with his maker: Let the Potshards strive with the Potshards of the Earth: shall the Clay say to him, that fashioneth it, what maketh thou? Or thy work, be hath no hands? Wo unto him that saith to his Father, what begetteth thou? Or to the woman, what hast thou brought forth? And the great sinfulness of this sin appeareth in these Particulars,*

1. It is a striving against the Lord, in the place now cited: the word in the Original signifieth a Contending in judgment, as *Lev. 3: vers 58.* Leading a processe against one, Judging or Sentencing in judgments: so also a Chiding, Contending with-
fighting.

fighting as *Gen. 26: vers 20, 22.* So that this sin is a calling of the most High to an account, and a bringing of Him before our judgment-seat, as *Iob 33: 13.* Where the the same verbe is used *Why dost thou strive against him?* (Or why dost thou call Him before thy tribunal, summond Him to compear before thee, or contend with Him in judgment, or plead against Him). He answereth not, *he giveth no account of his matters to any.*

2. It is a rebelling against the Lord. When the People of Israel murmured against the Lord, and against Moses and Aaron *Numb. 14: v. 1, 2, 3.* Moses said unto them *Vers. 9. Only rebel not ye against the Lord.* So it is said *Psal. 78: vers 40.* How oft did they rebel against him, in the wilderness? in the margine. See *Vers. 8.*

3. It is a manifest calling his *Wisdom* in question; and a saying, that He is not wise enough, to order and dispose matters aright. As if He were not mighty in wisdom *Iob 36: vers 5.* Our Wisdom were to cease from our own Wisdom *Prov. 23: vers 4.* and to beleeve, though we should not see, that in wisdom, he hath made the heavens and all *Psal. 104: vers. 34.* and *136: vers. 5.* and hath established the world in

Job Confid. 21. Gods crooked

in wisdom *Jer.* 10: vers 12. and 51: v. 15. And not think to give Him Counsel and Advice, how He should rule the world, for there are Depths of Wisdom, and of Knowledge in Him *Rom.* 11. 33. that we should think upon with Admiration; for if in our wisdom, we think to correct His wayes, and quarrel against them, and not comply with them, he will *destroy the Wisdom of the wise*, *1 Cor.* 1: 19, 20. O what a guilt must this be to proclame ourselves wiser, than He is; and better able to order all things aright, at least, what concerneth ourselves! The very hawk will not flie by our wisdom *Job.* 39: 26. and shall we think to prescribe Rules to God?

4. It is a calling in question of His *Absolute Power and Sovereignty*: As if He might not do what he pleased; but were obnoxious to us, and bound to give an account of his wayes to us, or could do injustice, or wrong to any. As if he had not that Power over His Creatures, to whom he hath given being and all they have, that the Potter hath over the lump of Clay; or we have over our beasts, which are our fellow-creatures, and hold not their being of us. And must not this be a great sin?

5. When

work can no man make straight. 408

5. When we are sinfully anxious and disquieted with his Dispensations towards his Church; We call into question His Faithfulness and Care of, and also his Love to his Church; as if he had forgotten to be gracious, and would be merciful no more, and cared not that she perished; as Christs Disciples said *Mark. 4: 38.* contrary to *1 Pet. 5: 7.* And this, sure, must be no small sin.

6. We hereby proclame Him to be an imperfect Worker; and say, that He is not God; for his works, who is God, cannot but be perfect; and his Way also, *Deut. 32: 4. 2 Sam. 22: 31.*

7. We profess ourselves hereby able to finde out the depths of His wayes, and to search Him out unto Perfection, as was said to *Iob Chap. 11: v. 7.* Why else will we think to reprove Him, and amend what He hath done, as if it were amisse?

8. When we are dissatisfied with His Dispensations towards us, we really accuse the Most Holy of Injustice; as if indeed He had wronged us, and we had deserved better at His hands; though all His wayes are Judgment, and though He be a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, and just and right *Deut. 42: vers. 4.* *Eliphaz* said

to Iob, after he heard his complaints Chap. 3. Iob 4: vers 17. *Shall mortal man be more just, than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?* Elibu said well Iob 34: vers 27. *Shall we condemne him, that is most just?* What a sin must it be, to lay such an Imputation on Him, who hath justice and judgment for the habitation of his throne Ps. 89: vers 14: and who is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice, Iob 37: vers 23?

Next, The Consideration of this should cause us watch against this evil, and labour for another frame of heart, that will be more complying with the Wayes and Works of the Lord. And for this cause, we should take another look of the Works of the Lord, and consider them in another manner, than we usually do: and this bringeth me to the *Third* thing in the Text, which will also lead us to a further improvement of this impossibility of helping what we suppose is amisse, in the Works and Dispensations of the Lord.

Thirdly, Therefore let us see, what way we should consider the Works of the Lord, to the end, we may have a futeable frame of spirit, complying sweetly with all the crooks that are, or we suppose to be, in Gods

Gods
this c

Work

W

the L

viden

1.

roote

this, t

and

calm

or di

from

henf

and S

the e

all in

he r

work

and i

to wh

ness a

forth

wou

and l

ther

and

this

con

work can no man make straight. 403

Gods Way and Works, for in reference to this only, shall we speak of considering the Works of the Lord.

We should then consider the Works of the Lord, whether of Creation, or of Providence.

1. So as that thereby we may become rooted and more settled in the Faith of this, that *He alone is Iehovah* above all Gods; and this would do much to quiet and calme our spirits: For our murmuring at, or displeasure with what *He* doth, floweth from the want of the clear sight and apprehension of the hand of the only Supream and Sovereigne God therein; Hence, to the end, that people may set Him above all imagined, false and supposed Gods, he readeth a lecture to them of His great works *Esai. 40.* from *vers 12.* and forwards; and inferreth once and againe *vers 18, 25.* *to whom shew will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare with him?* So he setteth forth several remarkable works, that He would do for his Church, *that they may see, and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that the holy One of Israel hath created this, Esai. 41: vers 20.* And when we consider His Works so, as to see Him alone

404 **Confid. 21. Gods crooked**

to be Jehovah, the Absolute and Sovereigne King, Creator, Conservator and Disposer of all Things, according to His own will and pleasure, then our hearts will bow more, and submit unto His holy Determination, and we will learne to say, with good old Eli, 1 Sam. 3: 18. ——— *It is the Lord Jehovah, let him do what seemeth him good.*

2. We should consider the works of the Lord, till we finde thereby, that He alone is the wise Governour of the World, and that there is a beauty of Divine Wisdom to be seen and observed on all, even on that, which we account most crooked, in our blinde and byassed judgments. Thus did holy *Iob Chap. 12.* contemplate the most crooked-like works of the Lord, such as, His breaking down, shutting up of a man, sending out waters to overturne the earth, leading Counsellours away spoiled, making the judges fools, removing the speech of the trusty, taking away the understanding of the aged, pouring contempt upon Princes, weakening the strength of the mighty, destroying and straitning the nations; taking away the heart of the chiefe of the People of the earth, causing them to wander in a Wilderness,

work can no man make straight. 405

erness, wherein is no way, to grope in the dark without light, and making them to stagger as a drunken man: and he saw in the midst of all this *vers. 12, 13, 16.* that *with the ancient is wisdom*, even wisdom and strength; and that he had counsel and understanding. Such a sight, as this, of the great and wonderful works of God, would cause us put our mouth in the dust, and adore the Depths of the Counsel of God; and be far from quarrelling with Him, for any thing he doth: and when any thing appeareth crooked to us, to suspect our own folly and ignorance, as not seeing in to the profound Projects, wise and unsearchable Contrivances of the only wise God; rather than impute folly and ignorance to the only wise God. It were best that we saw, that we ourselves were beasts *Eccles. 3: 18.*

3. It were our wisdom to consider the works of the Lord, so as to finde out, see and observe his Loving Kindness. After a long rehearsal of the mighty and considerable works of God, both of Creation and Providence; and that both as to the whole world, and more especially as to the Church *Psal. 104, and 105, and 106, and 107.* in end the Psalmist *Psal. 107: 43.* saith,

saith, *VVho so is wise and will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* There is a loving kindness engraven upon all the works and wayes of the Lord, a sight of which would teach us to acquiesce more heartily in all He doth, and submit more sweetly unto the most fowr and rugged of His Dispensations: The faith and the sight of this would make all the works of the Lord appear most straight and lovely to us: and therefore, that our hearts may comply more heartsomely and christianly with the works and dispensations of God, and that we may be kepted from so much as desiring to have his wayes and dispensations other then they are, let us study and meditate upon the works that He doth, till we discover therein this mystery of loving kindness, that is wrapped up in all, and brought about by all, that this great God doth in the world, about and for His Church.

4. We should also consider and contemplate the works of the Lord for this end, and until we did remark, in some measure, the Purity, Unspotted Holiness, Righteousness and Integrity of this great Worker, *Hos. 14: 9. Who is wise, and he shall un-*

der-

work can no man make straight. 407

derstand these things? Prudent and he shall know them? For the wayes of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressours shall fall therein. There is, in all the wayes of the Lord, whether we see it, or not, a divine and singular Righteousness; and it is the want of the sight of this, that makes us quarrel. *Jeremiah* knew that God was righteous, yet he did not see it so clearly, as was necessary, in the Dispensations of the Lord; and therefore he sayeth *Chap. 12: 1, 2.* as desirous to reason the case with God, *VVherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? VVherefore are all they happy, that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea they have taken root, they grow, yea they bring forth fruit &c.* So *Hab. 1: 2, 3.* O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear, cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save? *VVhy dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me, and there are that raise up strife and contention.* And againe vers. 13. — *VVherefore lookest thou upon them, that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man, that is more righteous than he? &c.* Therefore it would be our wisdom, so to consider the works of the

the

the Lord, as to be confirmed in the faith of this, that the Lord is Just and Righteous in all He doth; and so as to finde new and fresh demonstrations thereof; and then our hearts will be more calme under all, & more ready to submit to & acquiesce in all that the Lord doth.

5. We would study, dwell upon the thoughts of, and consider the works of the Lord, till we see and observe in them something of the Starelinesse, Excellency and Majesty of God; for in His works, which are honourable and glorious, wonderful and powerful *Psal. 111: 2, 3, 4, 6.* there are discoveries to be had of His excellent Majesty: yea a Spiritual eye can discern this, in the most common, obvious and ordinary of his works: *Elihu* saw this, in the bright light which is in the clouds, in windes cleansing of them, in faire weather coming out of the North, for after this, he addeth *Job. 37: 21.* — *With God is terrible Majesty.* God is indeed terrible in his doing to the Children of men. *Pf. 66: 5.* and this we will be convinced of, if we will come and see, and rightly consider His works. If we were thus studying the excellent works of the Lord, we durst not censure, or condemne Him, or His works.

works. But would rather fear; as it is Ps. 64:9. *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God, for they shall wisely consider of his doing.* And this would be our wisdom: wherefore after much said of the commendation of the works of the Lord, the Psalmist closeth the Psal. III. with this vers. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* The fear of the Lord, taught and learned by the works of the Lord, would prove our wisdom. This is one special use that we should make of His stately doings. I know (said the wise man Eccles. 3: 14.) *that whatsoever God doth it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: And God doth it, that men should fear before Him.* See also Job. 37. vers 22, 23, 24. and vers. 14, 15, 16.

6. It were good to be so considering and meditating on the works of the Lord, until we came to have low and abasing thoughts of ourselves: thus did the Psalmist Ps. 8. contemplate the work of God ver. 1, 2, 3. And then addeth vers. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him? And the Son of man, that thou visitest him?* And this would stop our mouth, when we were beginning to quarrel, at any thing He doth, and we would soon see cause of silence before

410 Confid. 21. Gods crooked

fore Him, because we would see, that we were but beasts.

7. We would so contemplate the works of the Lord, as to see and observe, how wisely, steadily, & irresistibly He Ordereth & Carrieth on His works, for through-
ing and bringing about His designed Ends. It is our ignorance of the ends and designs of God, that causeth us to complean and quarrel, and wish that His works were otherwise ordered and marshalled; for saw we these, and considered how pertinent and sureable all the passages of His way, and all the circumstances of His work, were unto the end designed, we would be forced to say, Behold He doth all things well. When *Elibu* had been considering *Iob* 37. the Lords thunder and the great & small raine, the whirle wind & the frost, and observed how the Lord did weary the thick cloud, and turne it about hither and thither; he did not satisfie himself with that, till he also got a look of the special ends, wherefore the Lord did so; that so he might see the beauty, and splendour, that was therein: therefore he addeth ver. 12, 13. *And it is turned round about by his Counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them, upon the face of the world,*

work can no man make straight. 411

world, in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. And thereupon vers. 14. exhorteth Iob to hearken unto this, to stand still and consider the wondrous works of God: And of Him, who (vers. 16.) is perfect in knowledge. And such a sight as this of the works of the Lord would put us far from intertaining such thoughts of God, and of his wayes, as we too ordinarily have. If we saw Him, in these His works, acting as a wise Governour, carrying on His noble and excellent Designs and Purposes, we would see a necessity for all that He doth; and that no Circumstance might be wanting; otherwise His work should not be perfect, as it must be. And the faith of His being a God of wisdom, doing all for wise and holy ends, should quiet us, even though we should not see the Particular end, which the Lord Intendeth in this or that Particular work.

8. We would consider also the work of the Lord, and see how thereby He executeth many a time His judgments on the wicked, and how He is pouring out His red wine, that is full of mixture, and causing the wicked of the earth drink out the very dregs; as it is *Psal. 75: 8*. And

412 Confid. 21. Gods crooked &c.

thereby making it appear, that verily there is a God, that judgeth in the earth *Pf. 85. 11.* Yea, even when He seemeth most to be favouring the wicked, and His dispensations smile most upon them, He is but heaping wrath the more upon them, and fitting them for the day of slaughter. *Asaph*, that could not see this, when he was under the Water, saw it clearly, when he went into the Sanctuary; then he understood their end, and saw that the Lord had set them in slippery places, and they were brought into desolation, as in a moment *Psal. 73: 17, 18, 19.* It was an heart-establishing sight, which the *Psalmist* had of the great works of the Lord *Psal. 92: 4, 5.* when he saw *vers. 6, 7.* that a brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this, when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

Con-

CONSIDERATION XXII.

Judgement upon a Land, because
of sin, sometime will not be
held off by the prayer of
God's people.

JEREM. 15: 1.

*Then said the Lord unto me, though Moses
and Samuel stood before me; yet my
minde could not be toward this peo-
ple: Cast them out of my sight,
and let them go forth.*

IN a time, when, because of publick
Land abounding sins, the Lord bringeth on
Publick and General Calamities; especi-
ally such, as sweep away the Righteous
with the Wicked, and that could not be
prevented or held off by all the Prayers
and Supplications of His people, how
earnest so ever they have been therein; it
may seem no small piece of difficulty, how
a beleever shall win to any life; or to know
what a life may be had, in a such a dismal
day: It may therefore be of use to speak
S 3 a little

a little hereunto, especially seing this is very like to be the case of this Generation,

These words, and the like Passages, show us, that indeed there is a time, when God is so provoked by the finnes of a people, that after much abused patience and long-suffering, He will not be intreated to hold off the stroke, that He is about to send, or hath threatned because of Provocations: Nor shall the eminentest of His favourites, & wrestlers, who sometime have prevailed as Princes with Him, be in case to stand in His way, and avert the blow, by all their Intreaties & earnest Supplications. God was about to bring on this people of Judah, the long threatned desolation, and did denounce the same by His Servant *Jeremiah*, saying *Chap. 7: 14. 15.* That He would do unto His house at *Jerusalem*, which was called by His name, and wherein they did trust, as He had done unto *Shilo*; and that He would cast them out of His sight, as He had cast out their Brethren, the whole seed of *Ephraim*. And that *Jeremiah* might understand the peremptoriness of this denunciation, He addeth *vers. 16.* *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them; neither*

J
mit
hea
so
sure
hall
pos
men
terp
aga
not
or p
in th
trou
now
for
Con
forg
earn
Jer.
w.
the
ple
to th
to th
supp
now
Mos
their
the b

Judgment sometime Inevitable. 415

neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee. The Lord hereby signifying not so much His will, that *Jeremiah* should surcease, and pray no more in their behalf; as the peremptoriness of His purpose and resolution, to bring on the judgment, so that all his Interceding and Interposeing should not avail: And this is againe renewed *Chap. 11:14.* Therefore pray not thou for this people; neither lift up a cry, or prayer for them; for I will not hear them, in the time, that they cry unto me, for their trouble. As if He had said, The decree is now gone forth, neither shall they prevail for themselves, nor thou for them. Yet Compassionat *Jeremiah* could not get them forgotten in his prayers; but intercedeth earnestly with the Lord, in their behalf *Jer. 14: 1.* From the beginning to the 10. ver. Whereupon the Lord said unto him the third time *vers. 11.* pray not for this people for their good. *Jeremie* againe *vers. 19.* to the end, notwithstanding of this, fell to the work of prayer, and did earnestly supplicat and interceed for them. But now the Lord tels him *Chap. 15: 1.* That *Moses* and *Samuel* should not prevail in their behalf; and therefore he may be the better satisfied, to hear that God would

not grant his Petitions, put up for them.

The like we have said foure times over *Ezek. 14: 14, 16, 18 20. Though these three men, Noab, Daniel and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls: and againe, Though those three men were in it, as I live saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.* The matter then, which we are to notice is manifest, to wit, That there is a time, when the sins of a people come to that height, that God will not spare, upon any humane Intercession: He will hear no Intreaty. That was an unalterable and inevitable sentence against the house of honest Eli. *1 Sam. 3: 14. And therefore I have sworne unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Elies house shall not be purged with sacrifice, nor offering for ever.* When the Lord would beginne, He would also make an end, as it is said *v. 12. So Esai. 22: v. 14. And it was revealed in mine eares by the Lord of hostes; surely this iniquitie shall not be purged from you till ye die.* There is a time, when the end is come, and the Lord will judge a people, according to their wayes, and recompense upon them all their abominations; and His eye shall not spare, neither will

Judgment sometime inevitable, 417

will He have pity : As *Ezek. 7: 2. to 10.*
And the Lord will not againe passe by
them any more. *Amos 7: vers 8. and 8.*
vers 2.

Such a time and dispensation, as this,
cannot but be afflicting and grievous to
all, that are concerned in such matters :
And the Consideration of these particulars
may manifest how sad it is, when the Lord
is so provoked against a People, as no In-
tercessions of His most highly honoured
Favourites, upon whose Intreaties,
sometime He hath manifested wonderful
condescensions of grace, will prevail to
keep off the stroke; no not *Moses* and *Samuel*
both together.

1. That the Lord hath done much
at the Prayer and Intercession of these two
in particular, here mentioned, *Moses* and
Samuel : For *Moses*, see *Exod. 32.* where
the Lord was so wroth and displeased at
the Peoples turning aside so quickly out of
the way, and making the golden Calf,
that He said unto *Moses vers 9, 10.* I have
seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked
People. Now therefore, let me alone, that
my wrath may wax hot against them; and that
I may consume them : And yet upon the In-
tercession of *Moses*, saying *Vers 11, 12, 13.*

Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hote against thy People, which thou hast brought forth out of the Land of Egypt, with great power and with mighty hand &c. It is said Vers 14. That the Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to do unto his People. So againe Numb 14: v. 19, 20. See Psal. 99: vers 5. and 106: v. 23. In like manner, as to Samuel we see 1 Sam. 7. that when the Children of Israel were in great fear of the Philistines, they said to Samuel Vers 8. Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God, for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And upon this Samuel cried unto the Lord, for Israel, and the Lord heard him. See also Psalm 99: v. 6. Is it not sad, that the Lord, who sometime did so much upon the Intreaty of these Persons, is now so offended, that He would not regard their Intercessions, nor spare upon their request?

2. That the Lord hath frequently spared, and kepted a stroke off His People upon the interposing of others, as of Amos Chap. 7: v. 2, 3, 5, 6. When he had prayed for the People, and had said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? The Lord repented and said, It should not be. And againe the
second

Judgment sometime inevitable. 419

second time he prayed, and had the same return. So *Nehemiab* 9. and *Daniel Ch.* 9. and *Asa* 2 *Chron.* 14: v. 11. and *Jehosaphat* 2 *Chron.* 20. and others.

3. That the Lord hath sometimes forbore to strick, when even graceless Persons, and such, as had no interest in the special favour of God, have prayed and humbled themselves: as when He spared *Ninivee*, after that natural People had humbled themselves: And when that wicked man *Abab*, that did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him 1 *Kings* 16: vers. 30, 33. rent his cloths, and put sack-cloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sack-cloth, and went softly, the Lord delayed the stroke, and would not bring the evil upon his house, in his dayes 1 *Kings* 21: v. 27, 29. How sad must it then be, that He, who sometime hath turned from the fierceness of His anger, and held off the evil threatned upon the crying of graceless Persons, will not hear the earnest Intreaties of His greatest Favourites?

4. This dispensation will also appear more sad and afflicting, if we consider what an high esteem the Lord hath for the Prayers and Intercessions of His worthies. Such

an account hath He of them, that the expressions thereof are indeed rare and very remarkable. *Let me alone*, saith He unto *Moses* *Exod. 32: v. 11.* as if *Moses* had been stronger than He, and had bound up His hands; or as if God could do nothing without *Moses's* consent or permission. So said He to *Iacob* *Gen. 32: v. 26.* when He was wrestling with Him by prayer and supplication *Hos. 12: v. 4.* *Let me go*: as if He could not have gone without *Iacob's* good leave and permission: And *Iacob* is said to have prevailed with God, as a Prince; and hath therefore his name changed into *Israel*.

5. Adde to this end, the frequent promises made of the Lords hearing of such, in the behalf of others *Gen. 20: 7.* the Lord said to *Abimelech*, *Restore the man his wife, for he is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.* So *Iob. 42: v. 8.* The Lord directed *Iob's* Friends to set him a work to pray for them, with a promise of success. *Go to my servant Iob, and offer up for yourselves a Burnt-offering; and my servant Iob shall pray for you; for him will I accept.* How sad then must it be, when the Lord will not hear such. See also *Iam. 5: v. 14, 15, 16.*

6. Yea

Judgment sometime inevitable. 421

6. Yea sometimes we read, that the Lord hath delivered, when there was no Intercessour *Eesai. 59: vers 16, 17. And He saw, that there was no Intercessour. Therefore his arme brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness it sustained Him.* Must not His anger then be great, when He will not pity, nor spare, even though His worthies, whom He highly honoureth, were standing before Him, and putting up Supplications, in the behalfe of a sinful People?

7. He hath said *Psal. 50: vers 15. — Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* Is it not then sad, when iniquity is come to such an height, that the Lord will not onely not hear the People themselves, when they cry; but also He will not hear the beseechings and intreaties of such, as have most prevailed with Him, at other times?

8. As also if we consider, how unanswerable this appeareth to be unto the Title and stile, which He hath gote, and the Consideration of which hath encouraged His servants to call upon Him: As *Psal. 65: vers 2. O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all Flesh come,* such a Dispensation, as this, cannot but be sad and grievous.

If it be enquired, when we may apprehend the time to be such, as wherein the Lord will hear no Intercessions, no Prayers, nor Intreaties of His greatest Favourites, in the behalf of a sinful People, against whom the Lord is coming in judgment? I answer, Though we may not be peremptour herein, knowing that the Lord sometimes taketh pleasure to Act, according to a Sovereignty of mercy; or the glory of His rich Grace and Compassion; and therefore must leave a latitude unto the Sovereignty of free Grace: Yet if we consider the condition of this People, of whom this is said; and see what iniquities they were guilty of, at this time, we apprehend such a thing may be feared, where the Lord is in the same, or in the like manner, provoked; and when He is coming in judgment against a people chargable with the same evils, it may be feared, that no prayer, no intercession of one or other, shall availe to hold off the judgment. Of these sins, whereof this People, for whom the Lord would hear no intercession, we shall mention some few, to the end we may be helped to understand better the language of Gods present Dispensations; and to search and see, whether

Judgment sometime inevitable. 423

whether there be cause or no, to fear, that judgment inevitable is to be the lot of this generation.

1. When sins, and rebellion against the Lord, come to an exceeding great height; and gross and palpable defection is begun and carried on by Court and Countrey; then the Lord is engaged to vindicate His Name and Justice, before the World; that all may see, He is no Patronizer of Wickedness, even in a People called by His Name. Thus it was in the dayes of *Manasseh*, who, with his Court, committed such hainous wickedness, as was never there before perpetrated, as may be seen *2 Kings 21: v. 1, to 10. 2 Chron. 33: 1, to 11.* and wherein the whole land was involved: Wherefore the Lord threatned *2 Kings 21: v. 12, 13, 14, &c.* to stretch over *Jerusalem* the line of *Samaria*, and the plummet of the House of *Ahab*; that is, that He would do with *Jerusalem*, as He hath done with *Samaria*, and the House of *Ahab*; and no more spare those, than He did these. And (which is very remarkable) this iniquity the Lord would not Pardon, notwithstanding that *Manasseh* himself got mercy, & reformed several things before his death; and notwithstanding of a more universal
and

and general Reformation, that was in the dayes of his Grand-child *Josiah*, that none-such King: For it is said *2 Kings 23: v. 25, 26, 27.* And like unto him (i. e. *Josiah*) was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the Law of Moses; neither after him, arose there any like him. Notwithstanding (as it is added) the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the Provocations that *Manasseh* had provoked Him with all. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, &c. And in this same place *Jer. 25.* after the Lord had said *Vers 1.* that though *Moses* and *Samuel* stood before Him, his mind could not be towards them; but that He would cast them out of His sight, to the death, to the sword, to the Famine, and to the Captivity, *Vers 2.* to the Sword, to Dogs, to Fowls, and to Beasts *Vers 3.* He saith *Vers 4.* And I will cause them to be removed into all Kingdomes of the Earth, because of *Manasseh*, the Son of *Hezekiah* King of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.

2. When heinous iniquities, and sins become common and epidemick, in a land, infecting all ranks of Persons, young and old,

Judgments sometime inevitable. 425

old, rich and poor, Magistrat, Minister and common People; then an inevitable blow is to be feared: for so was it with this people, as we see Jer. 5: vers. 1. &c. hardly could there a man be found in Jerusalem to execute judgment, and to seek the truth: Neither was this scarcety to be found only among the poor and foolish people; but even among the great men; for they had altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds Vers 5. therefore followeth Vers 7. *How shall I pardon thee for this? And againe Vers 9. Shall I not visite for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?* So in the two last Verses of that Chapt. it is said, *A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the Land. The Prophets prophesie falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their meanes, and my People love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof.* Such Priest, such People were here; and what else but ruine could be expected? So Jerem. 6: vers 13. and 8: v. 10. it is said, that from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the Prophet even unto the Priest, every one dealeth falsely: Therefore is wrath threatened both upon old and young, and upon all the inhabitants of the land Vers 11, 12.

See

See also *Vers 28*. They were all grievous revoltors, brasse and iron, they were all corrupters. So is this plainly charged upon them *Chap. 7: v. 18*. *The Children gather wood, and the Fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven.* So that Man, Wife and Children, young and old, were conspiring in one, and with one shoulder carrying on this Defection and Apostasie from God. So *Jerem. 11: v. 13, 14*. *For according to the number of thy cities, were thy Gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the Streets of Jerusalem, have they set up Altars to that shameful thing, Altars to burn incense unto Baal.* Thus was this sin become universal through the whole City Jerusalem, and through the whole Land of Judah: And what followeth hereupon? *Therefore pray not thou for this People &c.* The like we finde *Micah. 3: vers. 11*. *The Heads did judge for reward, and the Priests did teach for hire, and the Prophets did divine for Money: And what followeth upon this? Therefore (Vers 12) shall Zion for your sakes be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest; that is, Citie and Sanctuary shall be laid desolate.* This
same

J
 sam
 by
 with
 Wol
 Pers
 ry:
 corr
 ed a
 to 6.
 3.
 and
 foster
 tion
 inev
 is a
 guile
 will
 unto
 those
 His
 a cau
 this
 the f
 ed in
 threa
 Lord
 my S
 with
 also d

Judgment sometime inevitable. 417

same was laid to the charge of this People by *Zephaniah*, *Ch. 3: ver. 3, 4.* *Her Princes within her are roaring lions, her judges evening Wolves, her Prophets light and treacherous Persons, her Priests have polluted the Sanctuary:* So that both Church and State was corrupted: & therefore was woe denounced against her *Vers 1.* See also *Micah 7: 2, to 6.*

3. When Corruption in the Worship, and Ordinances of God, is admitted, fostered and continued in; and Superstition or Idolatrie is brought-in, then an inevitable stroke is to be feared: for God is a jealous God, and will not hold them guiltless that take His Name in vaine, but will visite the iniquities of the Fathers unto the third and fourth Generation of those that thus hate Him, and corrupt His Ordinances: This was also given as a cause of the destruction, that came on this People *2 Chron. 36: v. 14.* *They polluted the House of the Lord, which He had hallowed in Jerusalem.* So *Ezek. 5: vers 11.* it was threatned. *Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, surely, because thou hast defiled my Sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations; therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither*

neither will I have pity, See also the following Verses, where the dreadfulnes of the blow is laid forth: yea saith he Vers 13. thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted. And all is sealed in end Vers 17. with this, I the Lord have spoken it. So Ezek. 7: vers 20. As for the beauty of his Ornament, he set it in Majesty: But they made the Images of their Abominations, and of their detestable things therein. This was their sin, and what followeth? Therefore have I set it far from them, or made it unto them an unclean thing. And further in the following Verses, He threatneth, to give it into the hands of strangers for a prey, and to robbers, who shall defile it, &c. See likewise Chap. 8. throughout, and Chap. 23: vers 38, 39. So Jerem. 9: vers 12, 13, &c. The Land was perishing, and was burnt up like a Wilderness, that none passeth thorow: And wherefore was this? Because (saith the Lord) they have forsaken my law, which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their Fathers taught them &c.

4. When

Judgment sometime Inevitable. 419

4. When a land or Church maketh defection from God, apostatizeth, breaketh wedlock, renounceth their Covenant relation; then a sword is to be expected, wherewith the Lord shall avenge the quarrel of His Covenant *Levit 26: 25.* & there is ground to fear, that judgment shall inevitably overtake such sinners: For thus was it with this people of Judah *Ier. 2: 9, 10. 11, 12, 13.* So *Ier. 4: 16, 17, 18.* They had forsaken God, and rebelled against Him; and therefore came destruction upon destruction *v. 28.* and *Ier. 11: 10.* Because they brake God's Covenant, which He had made with their Fathers: Therefore *v. 11.* He threatned to bring evil upon them, which they should not be able to escape, and that He would not Harken, though they should cry unto Him: And then followeth *vers 14.* *Therefore pray not thou for this people &c.* So *Ier. 22: 6, 7.* The Lord threatned to make them a wilderness, and Cities not inhabited, in so much, that Nations shall be astonished, and enquire what can be the cause of this? And the answer they shall receive is this *v. 9.* *Because they have forsaken the Covenants of the Lord, their God, and worshipped other Gods & served them.* And in this same place

Ier. 15: 6. it is said, *Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward; therefore will I stretch out mine hand against thee, & destroy thee, I am weary with repenting.* See what was threatned for breach of Covenant Ier. 34: v. 17, 18, 19, 20. The Lord said, He would proclame a liberty to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine, and would make them to be removed into all the Kingdomes of the earth, and give all ranks among them into the hands of their Enemies; and give their dead bodies to be meat unto the fowls of heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. We see Ezek. 16. how the Lord deduceth a long process against them, and proveth them to have plaid the harlot, and that in a most impudent manner: And how therefore he saith, that He will judge her as a woman, that breaketh wedlock v. 38. & make his fury towards them to rest, and his jealousie shall depart, and He will be quiet vers. 42. and againe v. 59. He saith I will even deal with thee, as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath, in breaking the Covenant. See the like charged upon Israel, as the ground of their desolation. Hos. 4: 12, 13, 14. & 5: 4, 5, 6, 7. & 8: 1, 2, & 9: 1, 2, 3. & 13, 16.

5. When

Sometime Judgment Inevitable. 431

5. When this Defection and Apostasie from God in the matter of Religion, is accompanied with gross immoralities, fearful sins against the Second table of the Law, which the very light of Nature condemneth; then may the guilty fear an unavoidable stroke, & a blow of justice, that shall not be evited; for the Lord will not have it said, or supposed by strangers, that He will bear with gross impieties in His own professed people, and suffer them to exceed the heathen in wickedness, without control, or punishment: We see this people of Judah, upon whom inevitable ruine was coming, were charged likewise with many gross and hainous impieties *Ier.* 5: 26, 27, 28, 29. There vvere among them wicked men, they did lay waite, as such as laid snares, they set a trap, they watched men, their houses were full of deceit; yea they did overpasse the deeds of the wicked; & thereupon it followeth *v. 29* *Shall I not visite for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged of such a Nation, as this?* So *Ier.* 9: 1. They were all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men, they bend their tongues for lies like bowes, they did proceed from evil to evil, they taught their tongues to speak lies,

lies, and deceived their Neighbours; they spoke peacably, but in heart they did lay wait: Therefore it is added v. 9. *Shall I not visite them for these things? &c.* So Jer. 21: 12. *O house of David, thus saith the Lord, execute judgement in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressour; lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.* These things were neglected by them; and therefore wrath came upon them, at length, and there was no remedie Jer. 23: 3, 4, 5, 6. And the Prophet Ezekiel hath the same charge against this people Chap. 5: 5, 6. They changed Gods judgments into wickedness, more than the Nations, and his statutes more than the Countreys: And therefore the Lord threatned v. 8, 9, 10. to execute judgment in the midst of them, and to do that unto them, which He had not done before, and the like whereof He would not do any more: He would bring on them an unexemplified stroke, and a stroke, that should not have a parallel. And againe Chap. 9: 9, 10. *The iniquity of the house of Israel and of Judah is exceeding great, and the Land is full of blood, and the city full of perversness.* And therefore it is added, *mine eye shall not spare,*
mi-

Judgment sometime inevitable, 433

neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. Therefore was it, that commission was given to the Lord's executioners to go thorow and slay Old and young, maids and little children and women; yea all, except the marked ones v. 5, 6. See also *Chap. 16: 46, 47, 48.* *Judah* corrupted her self more than *Samarca.* yea more than *Sodom* v. 49: 50, 41. And *Chap 22:* we have a large Catalogue of their sins, see v. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And that as the provoking cause, drawing forth the sword, wherewith the Lord would cut off both the righteous and the wicked, mentioned *Chap. 21: ver. 3.* — 14. And bringing-on the desolation and scattering, mentioned *Chap. 22: 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22.* Thus the Lord dealt also with *Israel*, because of their manifold iniquities, mentioned *Hof. 4: 1, 2, 3.* there was no truth, nor mercy; in the land, nor knowledge of God; but there was swearing, lying, killing, stealing, adultery and blood touching blood. See also *Miscab. 6: 10, 11, 12, 13.*

6. When this defection, and course of sinning is long continued-in, and there is no wearying of this way, but rather a growing in this Apostasie; then such may

T fear,

fear, that at length the Lord will come, and will not spare, nor pity, nor passe by any more; for thus was it with this people of Iudah Ier. 16. there are sad judgments denounced against them, from the beginning to V. 10. And thereof the reason is given vers. 11, 12. - *Because your fathers have forsaken me, and have walked after other gods &c. And ye have done worse than your fathers; for behold ye walk every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me.* And therefore destruction is threatned of new v. 13. *Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land, that ye know not ——— where I will not shew you favour.* So Ier. 32: 30, 31. *For the Children of Israel, & the Children of Iudah have only done evil before me from their youth. And againe. This city hath been to me, as a Provocation of mine anger, and of my fury, from the day that they built it, even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face.* So the Prophet Ezekiel draweth up a long Libel of many Instances of their rebellion, continued in for many Generations, running in a constant line from Father to Son, from V. 3. to V. 33. and there we finde the sentence given out, *As I live saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand,*

Judgment sometime inevitable. 435

hand, and with a stretched-out arme, and with fury poured-out, will I rule over you And Israel was charged with this same guilt, *Hof. 10: ver. 9.* O Israel, thou hast sinned from the dayes of Gibeab. See also *Esa. 65: 7.*

7. When People become bold and impudent in their sinful courses, then there is ground to fear a sad and inevitable stroke of Justice: For thus was it with this People of Judah *Jer. 3: 3.* ——— Thou hadst a whores fore-head, thou refusedst to be ashamed. And againe *Jer. 6: 15.* Were they ashamed, when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: And what is added upon this? Therefore they shall fall among them, that fall; at the time, that I visite them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. So *Chap. 8: v. 12.* in these last mentioned places, the false Prophets would seem specially to be meant; yet the circumstances will include others. When People provoke the Lord to anger continually, to his face, as it is *Esa. 65: 3.* then they become a smoak in Gods nose, and a fire that burneth all the day, and they must expect a recompence from God, as *Vers. 5, 6.*

8. When People stand chargable with the abuse of many favours, received at the hands of God; which they have perverted, and mis-improven to the hardening of themselves in their wicked courses; then it is to be feared, that God will come at length, and be avenged on such a Generation of Perverters: This iniquity was also charged upon this People of *Judab* by *Jeremiah Chap. 2: 5, 10, 9.* Their forgetting the old kindneses of God, and abusing His favours, defiling His land, and making His heritage an abomination, is charged home *Vers 7.* *Wherefore* (saith the Lord *Vers 9.*) *I will yet plead with you, and with your Childrens Children will I plead.* So *Chap. 11.* after the Lord had said to *Jeremie*, *Pray not for this People Vers 14.* he addeth, as a provoking cause hereunto *Vers 15, 16, 17.* *What hath my beloved to do, in mine house, she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee, when thou dost evil, then thou rejoicest. The Lord called thy name a green Olive tree, faire and of goodly fruit. But there was no sutable walking; and therefore it followeth, with the noise of a great tumult, he hath kindled fire upon it, and the tranches of it are broken. For the Lord of Hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced*

Judgment sometime inevitable. 437

nounced evil against thee; &c. So Jer. 13. the Lord by a similitude of a girdle, sheweth how he had caused the whole House of Israel to cleave unto Him, and the whole House of Judah; that they might be unto Him, for a People, and for a Name, and for a Praise, and for a Glory: but they would not hear; and therefore he threatened to make them like unto the marred girdle; and so mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem, and make them good for nothing. See Vers 9, 10, 11. So Chap. 16: 18. he saith, *And first, I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin double, because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance, with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things.* Thus did they requite the kindness of God, in bestowing that land upon them, by defiling it with their sins; and therefore He threatneth to recompense their iniquity double. So doth the Prophet Ezekiel Chap. 16. make a large deduction of the favours and kindnesses shown to that people, and give us also a large summe of their abusings and pervertings of these favours: And therefore is wrath denounced from Vers 36. and forward. This was likewise charged upon Ephraim or Israel, by

Hosea Chap. 7: 13, 15. — they have transgressed against me, though I have redeemed them; yet they have spoken lies against me — though I have bound and strengthened their armes; yet they do imagine mischief against me. So Hos. 11: vers 1, 2, 3, 4. Esai. 1: vers 2.

9. When People become hardened in their sins, loving and delighting to wander out of the way, and glory in their wickedness, as resolving never to amend, and are therefore rushing at all threatenings, and contemning them; then is there great ground to fear an overturning blow, that no meanes shall avert: It was also laid to the charge of this people *Ier. 14: 10. that they loved to wander, and did not refrain their feet: And what followeth upon this? Therefore the Lord doth not accept them; He will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. And then Vers 11. The Lord said unto him, pray not for this People for their good. Vers 12. When they fast, I will not bear their cry — but I will consume them by the Sword, by the Famine, and by the Pestilence. So the Prophet Ezekiel Ch. 24. seeth Ierusalem, in the likeness of a pot full of pieces; and she is called Vers 6. the pot, whose scum is therein, and is not gone*

Judgment sometime inevitable. 439

gone out of it; she would cast away none of her abominations: and therefore the Lord said *Vers 9.* *Wo to the bloody City, I will even make the pile for fire great. Vers 10.* *Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burnt. Vers 11.* *Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brasie of it may be hot, and may burn: and that the filthinesse of it may be molten in it, and that the scumme of it may be consumed.* She would not put away her scum in time, and therefore the Lord will put an end to it in her destruction; and He will not be hindered; for it is added *Vers 13, 14.* *In thy filthinesse is leudnesse, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthinesse any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee, I the Lord have spoken it, it shall come to passe, and I will do it, I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent &c.* The same was the sin of Israel, for saith *Hosea Ch. 7:10.* *And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face; and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek Him for all this.* So *Chap. 11:7.* *And my People are bent to back sliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him.* They hardened their necks, that they

might not hear God's Words: Therefore the Lord said *Jer. 19: 15.* that He would bring upon *Jerusalem.*, and upon the rest of the Towns, all the evil that He had pronounced against it. It was this same People, of which *Zephaniab* spaketh *Chap. 1: 12.* *That were settled on their lees, and said in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.* Upon which, dreadful and desolating strokes are denounced, to the end of that Chapter.

10. When a People under their sins, turne brutish, sensual and senseless, regarding nothing that the Lord is either doing or saying, by His Servants or Dispersations; but following their pleasures, then an alarming and destroying stroke, that shall not be turned away, may be feared, according to that *Eesai. 22: v. 12, 13, 14.* *And in that day, did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, and behold joy and gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh, and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine eyes by the Lord of Hosts; surely, this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.* The like we have pro-

Judgment sometime inevitable. 441

pronounced by *Amos Chap. 6: v. 1*, &c against such, as are at ease in Zion, put far away the evil day, lye upon beds of yvory, & stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, invent to themselves Instruments of musick, like David; that drink wine in bowls, & anoynt themselves with the chiefe oyntments; but they are not grieved for the Affliction of *Ioseph*. Now see what the Lord threatneth upon this account *Ver. 7.* and forward, confirming the same with an Oath *Vers 8.* to shew the immutability of this Counsel.

II. When People are so far from taking conviction, and making challenges welcome, and from humbling themselves before the Lord, in the sense of their iniquities; that they will justify their owne wayes, and plead themselves innocent before God; Then, there being no more hop of their recovery, their case seemeth desperat, and they may expect a final blow: For this was also the sin of this People of *Iudah*; as we see *Ier. 2: v. 23* *How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim?* Therefore *Vers 24.* their moneth must come, wherein they shall

T. 5

shall be found and taken : So *Vers 35.* Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely, his anger shall turn from me. What followeth? *Behold I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.* So that the Lord is engaged so much the more, to plead His controverſie againſt them; and make them and the world both ſee, by ſad effects, how guilty they have been. Alſo we ſee how the Lord juſtifieth His procedour with this ſame People by *Ezekiel Chap. 18.* throughout: they would ſay, that all theſe calamities, which they did meet with, and were yet to meet with, came not on them for their own ſins, but for their Fathers ſins; their Fathers (ſaid they) had eaten ſowre grapes, and their teeth was ſet on edge; and therefore they concluded, that the way of the Lord was not equal: but the Lord, in that *Chapter*, is vindicating Himſelf, and evinceing that they were as guilty, as their Fathers, & did tread in their Fathers footſteps, approving all that their Fathers did; and therefore could not plead innocent. See likewiſe *Ezek. 33: 11, 10 20.*

12. When People will go on in their wickedneſs, and ſhelter themſelves under an outward Profeſſion of Religion and Piety; then it is to be feared, that God ſhall

Judgment sometime inevitable. 443

shall vindicat His Name and His G'ory, in the sight of the Nations, and make it appear that His outward worship and service shall be a scug to no profane Person: For this was also the sin of this People Jer. 7: 3, 4. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, amend your wayes and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place: Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these.* Because they had the Temple among them, they thought all should be well, and they should never be ruined, do what they pleased: But the Lord, in the following Verses, manifesteth that all that should no more save them, than it saved Shiloh; and then addeth Vers 15, 16. *And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your Brethren, the whole Seed of Ephraim. Therefore pray not thou for this People &c.* So saith the Lord by Esaias Ch. 1: 11, &c. *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices &c.* The Lord cared for none of these things, when their outward walk was not answerable to their profession; He would not hear their Prayers Vers 15. So Esai. 66: 3, 4. He thereupon threatened to choose their delusions, as they had chosen their

own wayes, and that in which He delighted not. See also *Amos 5: 21 to 23*. Micah laith his to the charge of this same People. *Chap. 3: 11*. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the Priests thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money: Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us, none evil can come upon us, But what followeth upon this? *Vers 12*. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountaine of the House, as the high places of the forest.

13. When iniquity aboundeth particularly amongst Church-men, who should both by their doctrine & example have reclaimed the people from their sinful courses; then the matter seemeth desperat, and God must be avenged on all together; Hence we see this same people charged with this *Jer. 2: 8, 9*. The Priests said not, where is the Lord? And they that handle the Law, knew me not: The Pastors also transgressed against me, and the Prophets prophesied by Baal, & walked after things, that do not profite. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your Childrens Children will I plead. See also *Ch. 6: 14, 15*. and *8: 11, 12, 13*. There was falshood among the Priests and the

Pro,

Judgment sometime inevitable. 445

Prophets, and they healed the hurt of the daughter of Gods People slightly; saying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace: And therefore followeth *Vers 13.* *I will surely consume them &c.* So *Ezek. 22: 25, 26.* *There is a conspiracy of her Prophets; in the midst thereof---they have devoured souls, her Priests have violated my Law, and have profaned my Holy things &c.* Therefore (as it followeth *Vers 31.*) have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God. See also *Hos. 4: v. 6, 7, 8, 9, and 9: vers 8.*

14. When a People lay not God's controversy to heart, when He is pleading the same against them by lesser judgments; nor are taking warning thereby, but notwithstanding thereof are going on in their sins; then it is to be feared, that God shall once for all send a consuming stroke, that they shall not evite: for this was also the sin of this People, as we see *Jer. 5: 3.* — *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction:* So *Chap 2: 30.* and *12: v. 11.* Thus was it also with Israel *Amos 4: v. 6.* and forward to the end: several par-

ricular judgments are there mentioned, but they wrought them not up unto a returning to the Lord *vers 6, 8, 10, 12*. And then a nameless Judgment, or a Judgment without a parallel, a judgment that could not be expressed is threatned; and they are bidden prepare for it *vers 12*. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; & because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*. See *Amos 7*. where also several Judgments are mentioned, but the Lord made not yet a full end: But at length *vers 8*. He saith, *I will not againe passe by them, any more*: And so againe *Chap. 8:2*. See likewise *Zeph. 3: 7*. *Eesai. 1: v: 5, 6, 7, 8*.

15. When oppression & injustice rageth among a people, then is there just ground to fear such an overflowing blow; Violence was one of the sins, that brought on the flood on the old world *Gen. 6: 11, 14*. And for this sin, was *Jerusalem* threatned with destruction *Eesai. 1: 21, 23, 24*. *How is the faithfull city become an harlot? — they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them*. Therefore thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies. So *Jer. 7: 6*. they were oppressing the

Judgment sometime Inevitable. 447

the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shedding innocent blood: As also Jer. 22: 17 18. And therefore are sore judgments threatned against their King *Jobajakim* vers 18, 19. that he should be buried with the burial of an asse, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. We see what was threatned against Israel *Amos* 2: 6, 7, 8. For this sin, of selling the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes, for panting after the dust of the earth, on the head of the poor, turning aside the way of the meek, and laying themselves down upon cloths, laid in pledge, & drinking the wine of the condemned, in the house of their God. See also *Amos* 8: 4, 5, 6. where this sin of unrighteousness and oppression is charged upon them; and then followeth vers 7. *The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely, I will never forget any of their works.* 8. *shall not the land tremble for this, & every one mourn that dwelleth therein? &c.* So *Mic.* 2: 1, 2. the like sin is charged upon that people: and then it followeth V. 3. *Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks.* And utter desolation is threatned v. 4, 5. And v. 10. It is said *Arise ye,*

ye, & depaire; for this is not your rest &c. See likewise Ch. 3: 1, 2, 3, 4. and againe v. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Habbakuk* also saw this sin in *Judah Chap. 1: 2, 3, 4.* Violence, Iniquity, Grievance, Spoiling, Strife and Contention, no Judgment, but wrong Judgment: Therefore v. 5, 6. &c. an incredible work of Judgment was to be wrought, and the *Caldeans* were to be sent against them. So was the like threatened by *Zephaniah Ch. 1: 3, 7, 9.* for the same sin and 3: v. 3. See *Esf. 5: 23.* to the end.

16. When people will not follow Gods way, and turne at His reproof, but go on in their sin; and when evil cometh upon them, use carnal shifts to save themselves, and run to the arme of flesh; then it is to be feared, that Gods anger shall break out and burn without remedie: For this was also the sin of *Iudab*, they would not turn to God, but trust in *Egypt* and *Affysia*, in their strait *Ier. 2: 8, 9, 36, 37.* So *Esf. 8: 6, 7, 8.* For as much as this people refuseth the waters of *Shiloah* that go softly, and rejoice in *Rezin* and in *Remaliab's* Son: Now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river strong and many, even the King of *Affysia*, ——— and he shall

Judgment sometime Inevitable. 449

shall passe thorow Iudab, and shall overflow and go over &c. So Hof. 5: 13, v. 14. When Ephraim saw his sickness; & Iudab his wound; then went Ephraim to the Assyrian — I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as an young Lion to the house of Iudab: I, I will tear and go away, I will take away, and none shall rescue. And againe Chap. 7: 11, 12. Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down, as the fowls of the heaven: I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard. And againe Ch. 8: 8, 9, 10. Israel is swallowed-up, now shall they be among the Gentiles, as a vessel wherein is no pleasure: for they are gone up to Assyria.

17. When people, settling on their lees, grow secure, and carnally confident, as afraid of nothing, as if they were without the reach of God's hand, and all hazard; then it is to be feared, that God shall make it appear, that He is stronger, than they: For this likewise was the sin of Iudab Jer. 2: 13, 14. Behold I am against thee, O Inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plaine, saith the Lord, which say, who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations? But I will punish you according to the fruit

fruit of your doings ——— and I will kindle a fire, in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about. This was also charged on Israel by Amos Chap. 6: 13. Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, have we not taken to ourselves horns by our own strength? For which cause see what followeth Vers 14. But behold I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, -saith the Lord the God of Hosts, and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath, unto the River of the Wilderness. The like we finde Amos, 9: 10. All the sinners of my People shall die by the Sword, which say, the evil shall not overtake, nor prevent us. See Ezek. 9: 9, 10.

18. When a People have followed these courses of sin, notwithstanding of many reiterated warnings and admonitions, given by the Lords Servants; then it is to be feared, that God shall wait upon them with warnings no longer, but shall once for all send a devouring stroke, that they shall not with all their cries get prevented, nor taken off them; according to that Prov. 29: 1. He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedie. And that Prov. 1: 24. to 31. Because I have called, -and ye refused &c.

Judgment sometime inevitable. 451

&c. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlle winde ——— Then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answer &c. Thus was it with this People of Judah, Jer. 7: 13. And now because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spoke unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not. Then it followeth Vers 14, 15. Therefore will I do unto this House ——— as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out of my sight, all your Brethren, The whole Seed of Ephraim: And then He addeth Vers 16. Therefore pray not thou for this People. The same sin is againe charged upon them Vers 25, 26, 27, 28. And then it followeth Vers 29. Cut off thine Hair, o Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation; for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. So Jer. 25. vers 3. the Prophet tels them in the fourth Yeer of Jebojakim, that he had spoken unto them 23. Year, viz. from the 13. Year of Josiah; but in all vaine: and Vers 4. that the Lord had sent unto them all his servants the Prophets; but all was in vaine Vers 7. Therefore sad judgments
are

are threatened *Vers 8, 9, 10, 11.* even utter desolation, and slavery under the King of Babylon full 70 Years *Vers 12.* See also *Ez. 29: 17, 18, 19.* and *35: 17.* This was Israels sin also *Hos. 5: 2,* and *6: 5, 6, 7.* and *9: 17.* *My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him: And they shall be wanderers among the Nations.*

19. When People not only will not take warning; but also rush at warnings; then may they fear, that God shall be avenged upon them; for thus was it with this People of Judah, *Jer 5: 11, 12, 13.* *For the House of Israel and the House of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me. They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not He; neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see sword, nor famine: And the Prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them.* Therefore is destruction by the Chaldeans threatned, in the following *Verses 14, 15, 16, 17.* See also *Jer. 6: 10, 11, 12.* So *Jer. 18: v. 12, 13.* When the Lord threatned sad dayes to come upon them; all the use they made of it, was *They said; there is no hop; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.* We know what that wicked King did with the roll

Judgment sometime inevitable. 453

roll of threatenings *Ierem. 36.* but see what followed thereupon *Vers 30, 31.* and another roll is written with additions *Vers 32.*

20. When People turn so impudent in their wayes, and so fixed in their sinful courses, that there is no moving of them by all the warnings that can be used; nay, they become enraged at, and persecute such as do admonish them, or exhort them to amend; then the case seemeth to be desperat, and their destruction must come: for thus was it with Judah *2 Chron. 36: 15, 16: They mocked the Messengers of God, and misused His Prophets, until the Lord arose against his People, till there was no remedy.* And what sufferings *Jeremiah* met with at their hands, for his faithfulness, his book telleth us *Chapters 11, and 26, and 38.* So was it with Israel *Amos 5: 10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, & they abhorre him, that speaketh uprightly.* See also *Amos 7: 10. to the end.* Upon which followed *Chapter 8: v. 2. the end is come upon my People Israel, I will not againe passe by them any more.*

How much more may a People, or a generation, among whom not one, or two, or a few onely of those sins are to be found; but

but all of them, fear, that such a stroke be coming, that no prayer or humane intercession shall avert? The Lord tels us by *Ezekiel Ch. 14.* that when He breaketh the staff of bread, and sendeth famine, on a land, because of their trespassing grievously, though these three Men *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job* were in it, they should deliver but their own souls *Vers 13, 14.* And againe if He spoile the land by noisome beasts, though these three Men were in it, they should deliver neither Sons, nor Daughters &c. *Vers 15, 16.* So when He bringeth a Sword upon the Land v. 17, 18. or a Pestilence v. 19, 20. And then addeth v. 21. *How much more, when I send my foure sore judgments upon Ierusalem, the Sword and Famine, and the noisome Beasts, and the Pestilence, to cutt off from it man and beast?* that is, how much more shall I go on and devoure? And how much less shall they think to escape upon the Petitions of *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job*, or upon the account of their relations to them. So, if upon one, or two or a few of the forementioned sins, we finde, that God will bring upon a land inevitable judgments, and will not be stopped, in the execution, by the intercessions of *Moses* and *Samuel*; how much more, may

Judgment sometime inevitable. 455

may we suppose certainly and unavoidably shall judgment overtake a generation, that is guilty of all those twenty grievous iniquities?

From this matter all of us may learne these lessons.

1. To fear and tremble before this God; seing He is so just and severe a judge and Governour, and seing it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

2. To beware of abusing His Patience: for howbeit it may endure for sometime; yet it will expire at length, as to its effects; and abused longanimity will end in unavoidable ruine, and in inevitable strokes of Iustice.

3. All, whether Lands or particular Persons, who know themselves guilty of the evils mentioned, as causes procuring such inevitable rodes, should hast to break off these courses, that will, no doubt, hasten-on irremediable destruction: It were best to get out of the way of the wrath of God in time.

If it be enquired, what the People of God are called to do, in such a day, when the place they live-in, is guilty of and continuëing in these grievous sins, and they

they can look for nothing but wrath to be poured-out; so that no Prayer, Fasting, or Supplication shall hold it off? For Answer, Let such minde those duties following,

1. Let them beware to seek great things for themselves, Ier. 45. The Lord said to Baruch by the Prophet Ieremie vers 4, 5. Behold, that which I have built, will I break down; and that, which I have planted, will I pluck up, even this whole land: and seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not; for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord. Whence we see, that it becometh not the People of God, to be too much minding themselves, and their own things, in such a day; but they ought to be very well satisfied, if the Lord give them their life for a prey: as He promised to Baruch.

2. They should stoup, and adore this God, who is just and righteous in all His wayes; they should be silent before Him, and put their mouth in the dust: no quarrelsome thoughts should have place or room, in their hearts. Hold thy Peace saith Zephaniah Ch. 1: 7.) at the presence of the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is at hand: For the Lord hath prepared a Sacrifice, He hath bid his

gusts

Judgment sometime Inevitable. 457

guests &c. When the Lord is about to make a Sacrifice in a land, and to give the carcases of men to the fowls of the Heavens, and the beasts of the field; all flesh should be silent, and His People especially should quiet themselves, and hold their peace before Him, without murmuring, or venting any discontentment, at the matter.

3. They should observe the glory of the Lord, shining forth, in that remarkable Act of Holy Justice; see His Majestic, Awfulness, Terrour, and just Severity, to the engaging of their hearts more unto Him, and to a glorying in Him. The black and dreadful day, that was to come upon Judah, was mentioned, and several things held forth, to make it have a deeper impression *Jer. 9: and v. 22.* it was said, that even the carcases of men shall fall, as dung upon the open field: And then it is added *v. 23.* Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom &c. and *Vers 24.* But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. To tell us, that in such a day especially, the Lords People should be ta-

V king

king a right view of God, that they may understand and know Him to be Jehovah & one that exerciseth judgment and righteousness in the earth; and withall one, that even then, exerciseth loving kindness to His own; and a God that delighteth in these exercises; and that they should glory in Him, even in such a day, and delight in that wherein He delighteth.

4. They would do well to refuge themselves in time, in their chambers, and shut their doors about them, and hide themselves for a Little moment, until the indignation be overpast: As it is *Esa. 26: 20.* This is the Counsel of the Lord unto His people, in a time, when *the Lord someth out of His place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth, for their iniquity. v. 21.*

5. They should rest satisfied, though their prayers, in behalfe of the land, have not that success and fruite, that they could have wished; & that upon these grounds and considerations.

(1.) Out of that Dispensation, howbeit both black and terrible; yet God will get glory, both of his *Truth* and *Veracity*, in his threatnings, at which the wicked tushed, & would give no credite to them; which

Judgment sometime Inevitable. 459

which carriage could not but Afflict His people; it could not but grieve them to see those wicked ones carry so atheistical-ly, as contemning all the Denunciations of wrath; but now when the day of execution is come, the Lord is seen to be a God of truth, and His people see then, whose word standeth, whether God's Word, or the word of those wicked sinners *Ier. 44: 28.* And of His justice in pursuing evil doers, who said, by their doings, that He had forsaken the earth, or that He was not a God, that judgeth in the earth. So also of His Holiness, and Purity: For then it's made manifest, that He is not, as they imagined, altogether such an one, as themselves; but that He hateth all the Workers of iniquity.

(2.) God will have a care of them, even then, and be a little sanctuary unto them *Ezek. 11: v. 16.* and cause all things work together for good to them *Rom. 8: v. 28.* He will set a mark upon such, as sigh and cry for all the abominations, that are done, that the men with the slaughter weapon may not come nigh unto them *Ezek. 9.*

(3.) He will return their prayers

into their own bosome againe ; so that they shall not fall to the ground *Psalm 35. vers 15.*

(4.) He will accept their prayer and intercession, as good service, off their Hand even though He think not good to grant the Particular, that they ask: And if they be accepted of Him, in that piece of service, it may suffice and satisfie.

6. They would do well to be sighing and crying for all the abominations, that are committed in the land ; to be keeping themselves free of that guilt, mourning over the same, protesting against it, abhorring the same ; that they may be preserved and protected in the day of God's contending, according to what we read *Exek. 9: 4. 6.*

7. In the midst of all these desolations, and the effects of the Lords indignation, burning against a sinful generation, they are called to act faith, on God, as the true and faithful God, keeping mercy and covenant for ever, and to waite upon him, in faith, hoping and expecting with confidence, that He will carry on His work, and make His Kingdom come, and make all this contribute unto that end. We see what

Judgment sometime inevitable. 461

what desolation *Zephaniab* is threatening against *Ierusalem*, and the rest of the Cities of *Iudab* for their great sins *Chap. 3. 1, to 7.* And thereafter *Vers 8.* he inferreth and presseth on them, that would minde the duty of the day, a waiting in Faith and Hop upon the Lord, saying, *Therefore waite ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day, that I rise up to the prey, &c.* And then followeth *Vers. 9, 10.* For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent, from beyond the Rivers of *Ethiopia*, my suppliants, the Daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. They should wait in faith for the accomplishment of all the great and precious promises made to the Church, notwithstanding of all these sad interveening Dispensations. This was the resolution of the Prophet *Esai Chap. 8. 17.* in an evil day, when many should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared and taken *Vers 15.* And I will (said he) wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the House of *Jacob*, and I will look for him.

But it will be said, what shall the righteous do, in the day, when God is so angry at the whole Land, that He will cut off the righteous with the wicked, and to

this end shall draw His Sword forth out of His Sheath against all Flesh, from the South to the North, as it is *Ezek. 21: 3, 4, 5*? For *Answer*, I grant such a dispensation may be expected, when all Flesh have corrupted their wayes, and even the righteous, who have not gone the length of others, in Defection and Apostasie, yet have not been valiant for the Lord, and for His oppressed truth, nor so faithful and zealous for the Lord of Hosts, in their Generation, as became them: It is then to be feared, that even many of them shall be swept away with the common calamity, as they have been in part tainted with the common sin, procuring it. And in that case, it is their part to minde these duties following.

1. To be preparing to meet the Lord, with ropes about their necks, acknowledging their sin, giving glory unto the Lord, as just and righteous, in proceeding thus against them with the rest: They should prepare to meet their God, thus coming in His holy displeasure, to glorifie His justice, as the Prophet adviseth Israel to do *Amos 4: 12*.

2. They should be busie to get their peace made with God in time, through
Jesus

Judgment sometime inevitable. 463

Jesus Christ, that when God shall get glory on their carcases, in the sight of others, they may get their souls for a prey: They should be mourning as doves in the valleys, every one for his iniquity, that their sin may be blotted out, and their souls washen in the blood of Jesus.

3. They should be amending, through the help of the Lord, what hath been amisse, and seeking to Him, and seeking righteousness, & meekness, upon a may be of being hid, in the day of the Lords anger, this is the exhortation of *Zephaniah Chap. 2: 3.* Even to the Godly, *Seek ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be ye shall be hid, in the day, of the Lords anger.*

4. If they should not be hid, but the judgment should overtake them, as well as others, then let them sweetly submit, and lye under the rod, and humble themselves under the mighty Hand of God, *Jam. 4: 10. 1 Pet. 5: 6.* and say, with good old Eli, when sad things were denounced against his house; and it was told him, that God would judge his house forever, and that the Lord had sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity thereof should not be purged with

Sacrifice, nor offering for ever. It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good, 1 Sam. 3. 12, 13, 14, 18. He saw it was Jehovah, who could do no wrong; and therefore he was quiet, and acquiesced to all, that He would do, how sad so ever it was: He saw Him the righteous Governour and Iudge, and said, His holy Will be done.

5. They should accept of this punishment of their iniquity *Levit. 26: ver. 41.* giving Glory to Gods Iustice, and have a complacency (for so the word will import) in that stroke, as being a stroke of Iustice, and a stroke, whereby God will be glorified in His Iustice, Righteousness and holy Severity: Thus should they kisse the rod, and contentedly welcome the Sword of Justice, and kisse its point, when pierceing their heart, because of their sins.

6. Thus should they say with good *Hezekiab*, when sad things were denounced against his Family, *Eesai 39: vers 6, 7. Good is the Word of the Lord. Vers 8.* It is *Jehovah's* Word, I have nothing to say against it; holy and righteous is He, and his Judgments are righteous

Judgment sometime inevitable. 465.

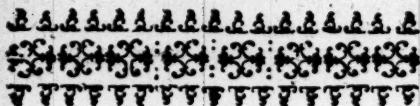
teous , His Threatnings are good : And
thus should they with the Church ,
*Micah 7: vers 9. Bear the Indignation of
the Lord , because they have sinned against
Him.*

A M E N.



V 5

A



A T A B L E
Of the
C O N T E N T S.

THE Introduction. Pag. 1.
Seven Considerations handled at more
length in the first Part, briefly resum-
ed. Pag. 2, 3, 4.

Confid. VIII.

It is the decreed will of God. Pag. 5.
How trouble is decreed of God, in Seven
Particulars. 8, to 13.
How the Consideration of this calmeth the
heart, in Six cases. 15. to 23.
How it helpeth under affliction, in Eight
particulars. 23, to 27.
How this Consideration is set home, in
Three particulars. 28, to 32.
Confid,

Confid. IX.

<i>It is the commanding Will of God.</i>	32.
That suffering sometimes is the Will of God, cleared in 8. particulars.	34, to 37.
The season, wherein People are called to suffer, cleared	37, to 39.
How we shall know, if we be called to suffer.	39, to 52.
How this Consideration is to be improved in 10. particulars.	52, to 61.

Confid. X.

<i>God overruleth afflictions.</i>	62.
God hath an hand in Afflictions, cleared from 6. Grounds.	64, to 71.
The way hereof, cleared in 14. particulars.	71, to 82.
How this Consideration should be improved in 8. particulars.	83, to 101.

Confid. XI.

<i>Christ himself had a suffering life.</i>	102
---	-----

468 A Table of the Contents.

- Twelve particulars, concerning Christ's sufferings considerable. 104, to 113.
How this is to be improved in 7. particulars. 114, to 125.

Confid. XII.

- Our sufferings not comparable to Christ's.* 127.
The disproportion cleared in 6. particulars. 127, to 133.
How this is to be improved in 7. particulars. 134, to 138.

Confid. XIII.

- Sufferings the lot of the Church.* 140
Ten particulars, concerning the sufferings of the Church, considerable 141, to 146.
How this ought to be improved in reference to the Church. 147, to 152.
How in reference to our selves in 6. particulars. 152, to 154.

Confid. XIV.

- Other believers have been afflicted.* 145
Six

A Table of the Contents. 469

Six particulars to be considered by such as are afflicted. 156, to 159.

Ten particulars, wherein, possibly, others have suffered more than we. 159, to 170.

How little ground of complaint, if all were known, cleared in 5. particulars. 170, to 173.

How the example of others should be improved in 8. particulars. 173, to 176.

Confid. XV.

Suffering is Gods Gift. 177.

That suffering is Gods Gift. 178, 179.

Right suffering is Gods Gift, cleared in 12. particulars. 180, to 187.

This Gift is purchased by Christ. 187.

How this gift is beyond the gift of Faith, cleared in 10. particulars. 188, to 192.

Five evils that this Consideration would help. 194, to 198.

This Consideration informes us of 3. particulars. 199, 200.

And calleth for 4. Duties in general. 200, 201.

And for 5. other Duties more particularly. 202, to 204.

How comfortable it is in 7. particulars. 204, to 207.

V 7 Con-

470: A Table of the Contents.

Confid. XVI.

*The Sufferings of Christs Servants are for
the good of the Church.* 208.

Six advantages, which the Church reapeth
by such Afflictions. 210, to 215.

How this is to be improved in 3. particu-
lars. 216, to 218.

Confid. XVII.

The Lord reigneth in Zion. 219.

How Christ reigneth, cleared in 14. par-
ticulars. 220, to 228.

Twelve Conclusions drawn therefrom.
229, to 240.

Confid. XVIII.

The time of Affliction is but short. 241.

How the Scriptures express this shortness
in 11. particul. 242, to 248.

An Objection answered by 8. particu-
lars. 246, to 256.

How this is to be improved in 7. particu-
lars. 257, to 261.

Confid

A Table of the Contents. 471

Confid. XIX.

<i>Remember Peter's Fall.</i>	262.
Three things good and imitable in Peter.	264, 265.
Three things wrong, and to be shunned by us.	265, to 268.
Twelve useful Lessons drawn from this Passage.	269, to 279.

Confid. XX.

<i>Gods way of delivering his People is oft hid and Mysterious.</i>	280.
Various hidings of God.	280.
Various Effects of this hiding.	281.
What is the hiding mentioned <i>Esai</i> 45: v. 15.	282, 283.
Ten things considerable in the Prophet's frame.	284, to 294.
Singular steps of Majesty sometimes to be seen in Gods Deliveries.	296.
This cleared in 12. partic.	299, to 316.
Four Reasons of the Lords taking this way, in reference to Himself.	319, to 322.
Six Reasons of this, in reference to Enemies.	324, to 328.
	Two

472 A Table of the Contents.

Two maine ends of this, in reference to his own People. 329, to 334.

Six particulars, which this dispensation calleth for, at the Hands of Gods People. 335, to 339.

Three things observable from the Prophets seeing God, even then, to be the God of Israel. 340, &c.

First, That Gods dark dispensations alter not His Relations. 340, &c.

This improved in 4. partic. 346, to 350.

Secondly, God may be seen, when hiding Himself, and how. 350, to 353.

How this should be improved in 4. particulars. 353, to 355.

Thirdly, That when God hideth Himself, his People should assert His relation to them, and expect He will answer His relation, both cleared in several particulars. 356, to 358.

Six duties then to be minded. 359, to 361.

Two other particulars in the Text cleared. 361, to 363.

Confid. XXI.

No man can make straight, what God hath made crooked.

364.
Eight

A Table of the Contents. 473

Eight crooked things, which are more controverted.	368, to 377
Six other things in the Lords Dispensations, which seem crooked.	377, to 382.
Eight particulars about the Church, which seem crooked to us.	383, to 385.
Eight other particulars, about privat beleevers, that seem crooked.	386, 387.
How these cannot be made streight.	389.
When we foolishly seek to make streight what God hath made crooked, in 10. particulars.	392, to 398.
Eight aggravations of this evil.	398, to 401.
Eight wayes of considering the works of the Lord aright,	403, to 412.

Confid. XXI I.

Judgment on a Land sometime is not to be held off by Prayer. 413.

The matter cleared from Ierem. 15: ver. 1. 413, to 416.

How sad this is, cleared from 8. particulars. 417, to 421.

When such an inevitable stroke is to be feared, cleared in 20. partic. 423, to 453.

How this should be improved, in several particulars. 456, &c.

What

474 A Table of the Contents.

**What should satisfy the Godly, in this
case, when their prayers are not heard,
in 4. particulars. 458**

**What the Godly should do, when God is
about to cut off the Righteous with the
wicked, cleared in 6. particulars. 462**

F I N I S.



ERRATA.

PAg. 51. lin. 14. *wong*. r. wrong. p. 54.
 l. 2. *their*. r. his. p. 65. l. 21. *maice*. r.
 malice. p. 87. l. 25. *art*. r. are. p. 97. l. *an-*
sep. & penult. ordereth. p. 117. l. 20. fra-
 grant. p. 118. l. 128. put to the. p. 141.
 l. ult. Seventy. p. 197. l. 4. *aer*. r. are. p.
 217. l. 17. becometh. l. 18. become. p. 226.
 l. 21. treasures. p. 255. l. 11. woman. p.
 264. l. 10. *this* r. his. p. 305. l. 9. *Crus* r. *Cy-*
rus. p. 320. l. penult. *there* r. there; p. 328.
 l. 9. *them* over. the more. p. 358. l. 10. *noly*
 r. only. p. 422. l. 25. after *People* adde.
 were guilty. p. 429. l. ult. r. served.